

What is Conformitygate?

The idea that the finale we were given is a false finale, and there will be at least one more episode that contains the real finale.

More specifically, the idea that this is all a vision that Vecna is showing Mike, aka Mike being Vecna'd, and we are experiencing his warped reality with him.

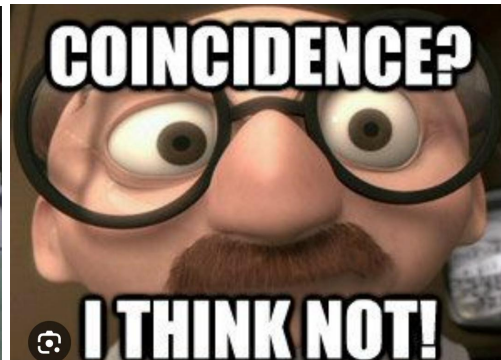
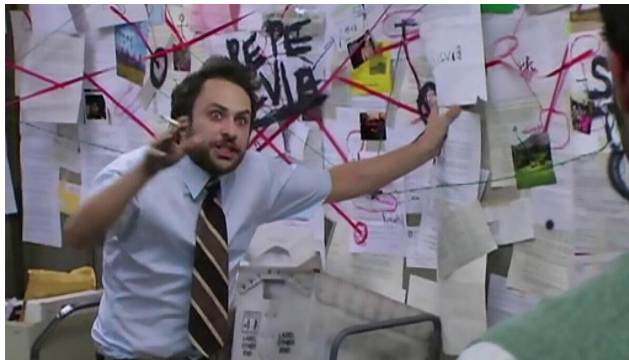
This is a work in progress. Things might get moved or edited as I find new evidence.

Feel free to leave notes, suggestions, corrections, or tell me about other stuff you might've found!

Tumblr: smalltownshrimp

~~Forgot I deleted my tumblr from here because I shared this with a coworker~~

I don't believe in coincidences...



Me: I don't have enough faith that conformitygate is real.

Also me: WHERE'S MY GOOGLE DOC I JUST FOUND SOME NEW EVIDENCE

Me then: I found new evidence, gotta go type it up!! 😊

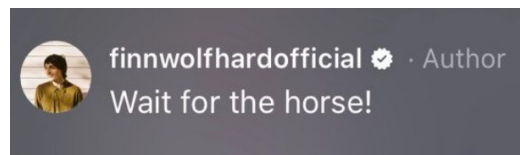
Me now: I found new evidence, gotta go type it up... 😞

Hanging onto conformitygate because I'm not ready to accept the death of Mike Wheeler.



Possible Release Dates

- **Jan 28** → Important(?) things in the show always happen on the 28th.
 - Oct 28, 1943: USS Eldridge enters the Abyss for the first time.
 - Aug 28, 1972: Will's birthday listed on the [program](#) for his funeral.
 - Oct 28, 1984: Kali & her crew escape the police officers, start of S2.
 - June 28, 1984: Russians try and fail to open the portal to the UD for the first time, start of S3.
 - June 28, 1985: Russians open the portal to the UD under Starcourt.
 - March 28, 1986: Max dies, Vecna opens the gates to Hawkins.
 - Jan 28 is also a Wednesday. (Same as Nov 26 & Dec 31.)
- **Feb 14** → Valentine's Day aka Day of Hearts.
- **Feb 15** → Duffer brothers' birthday.
- **Feb 18** → 6 weeks from Jan 7 & 12 weeks from Nov 26.
 - Also a Wednesday.
 - "A trip to China sounds nice." → 1 day after the lunar new year starts, the start of the year of the horse. ([Original post.](#))
 - Apparently Finn posted this before he hosted SNL but then deleted it.



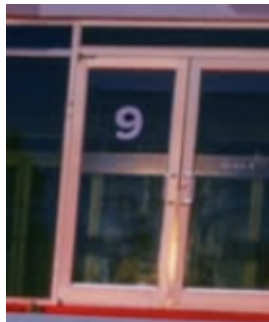
Deceiving the Audience

- On Jan 7, Netflix posted [a teaser announcement](#) for 2026 with the following caption: "In 2026, **you will be deceived, and you'll like it.** You will see old friends in a new light. You will actually look forward to family drama. For once. And you might even buy a corset (deep breaths). This year, you will question everything. What will you discover next?"
 - This announcement is a follow up for the original video they posted on Dec 25. (See January 7th.)
- JCB appeared on Jimmy Fallon's show on Jan 6. During the entire interview, he only ever referred to the finale as "Episode 8." The morning of Jan 7, [this video](#) was posted of Jamie appearing as a dance/zumba instructor.
 - During the video, Jamie ends the video by saying "Let's channel our energy. Tomorrow it begins," in a menacing tone before counting up to 12 ("Let's do the clock.")

- Vecna says he picked these children because they are “easily manipulated, controlled. The perfect vessels to reshape the world.” → Was he talking about the children or the audience?
- In the final campaign, the party was about to move on after **giving up hope and accepting that they lost TWICE** before winning. Once at Will’s turn right before Dustin suddenly remembers the Mage of St. Markovia, and a second time after Will tries to summon the mage and Mike says “nothing happens.”
- Consistent “9” imagery showing up in promotional material.
 - The [poster](#) for ep1.



- These cast [photos](#). → Someone also pointed out that these photos were taken at a specific building in Atlanta and that “9” isn’t supposed to be there. **It was added in.**



- Is it a 9 or is it an upside down 6? Either way, it has significance: episode 9 or season 6.
- 8 is the only number that is the same when flipped upside down. → Uhhh blah blah blah something something **the Rightside Up is still the Upside Down.**
 - S1 finale - episode 8: the Upside Down
 - S5 finale - episode 8: the Rightside Up
- Afternoon of Jan 18: **Season 5 has been disappearing and reappearing on Google.** ~~Also if you saw me freak out about S5 being taken off Netflix, no you didn't.~~



Manipulating Memories & Reality

- Tons of references to memories being warped or changed on purpose all throughout vol. 2 & ep8. → Max tells Holly (who apparently *is* Mike, according to Max) that she needs to look for things that are out of place (aka **inconsistencies**) in order to escape the false memory.
- **Stephen King theory** - the idea that Stranger Things is a thank you letter to Stephen King. ([Original video.](#))
 - The Dark Tower series (one of King's more popular works) deals with a lot of instances of breaking the fourth wall, in which the book tells (and practically begs) the reader to stop reading at a point when the ending seems like it could be a happy one.
 - Upon reading further, the reader discovers that the main character is actually **stuck in a time loop** that makes them repeat events over and over as they try to make tiny adjustments to their actions to get out of the loop.
 - There's many other parallels to DT like evil wizards, other worlds, time manipulation, doors in the open that lead to other places in space and time.
 - Lucas is reading The Talisman to Max when she first goes into her coma.
 - The font of the title is the same as King's font in his earlier books.
 - Stephen King. Stranger Things. Stephen Things. Stranger King. Stephen Thing. Strangen King. ~~You get what I'm sayin?~~
 - Side note: King is also well known for writing many of his characters with gay undertones that often go unnoticed by those who wouldn't understand them.
 - Other King books besides DT that involve time manipulation & trying to redo wrongs from the past.
 - 11/22/63
 - Just After Sunset
 - The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon
- **Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind** is on the list of movies to watch before S5 → a movie about memories being erased/changed.
 - Mike and Will parallel Joel and Clementine's outfits for seemingly no reason. In the movie, Joel (Mike) is undergoing a procedure that removes/changes his memories to erase Clementine (Will) from his life.



- [This instagram post](#) has the caption “meet me in philly.” → A direct reference to the film’s iconic line “meet me in Montauk.”
- Will mentions memories that seem like Henry’s are bleeding into his mind during his coming out scene.
 - Malted milkshakes at Melvald’s. → Melvald’s is a convenience store in the show, but in the play about Henry, it was a diner. Also, malted milkshakes were a big thing in the 50s more than the 80s.
 - “We like getting lost in the woods” → why would Will like getting lost in the woods? That’s how he was taken.
 - In ep1, Mike calls Joyce “Mrs. Byers.” Then, in ep6, he calls her “Joyce.” → Strange since those episodes are only a few days apart.
 - But you know who would call Joyce by her first name? Someone who knew her in high school. Someone like Henry. → If Henry is building this illusion, this would be another example of his memories bleeding in.
- The Truman Show → a movie that explores themes about reality vs. illusion & manipulating perception.
 - In the movie, Truman Burbank is a man who “unknowingly lives his entire life inside a massive, domed television studio, with everyone he knows (family, friends, wife) being paid actors, and his every moment is broadcasted live to the world without his consent.”
 - Truman starts noticing strange **inconsistencies** in his life that lead him to figure out that the reality he’s perceiving is being manipulated and isn’t actually correct.
 - In Will’s coming out scene, Will name-drops a bunch of products & brand names almost like a bombardment of advertisements. → this is something that also happens in the Truman Show.
 - The final shot of Mike walking up the basement stairs and closing the door is also a parallel to the Truman Show.



- In the epilogue, Will is wearing a similar shirt to Sylvia, Truman's one true love, as opposed to his fake, "perfect," actor wife.



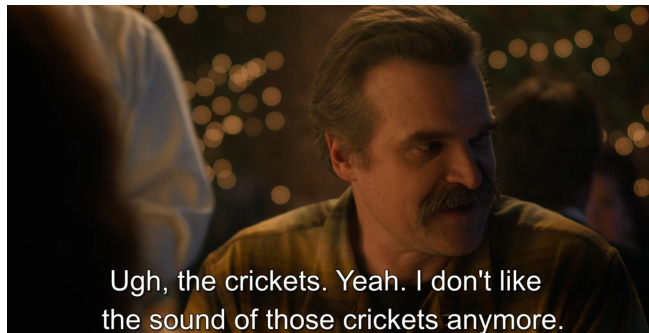
- The Time Magazine interview that the cast did also references The Truman Show with the blue sky/cloudy background & the formatting of the words. Finn (Mike) is at the center of the photo on the cover. →
 - The cover photo also shows glass cracks that almost look like puppet strings connecting to Finn's heart. ([Original post.](#))



- Mike also resembles Coraline's father → a movie about a false reality, and trying to use clues (specifically **inconsistencies**) to figure out how to escape that reality.



- When Hopper asks Joyce to move to Montauk with him, he says he wants to replace the sound of crickets with a squawk of seagulls.
 - The plot twist in Wayward Pines is that the whole town is fake, and the cricket sounds are the thing that makes the protagonist realize this. ([Original post](#))
 - Hopper mentions how he doesn't like the sound of crickets anymore and that's why he wants to replace the sound with seagulls.



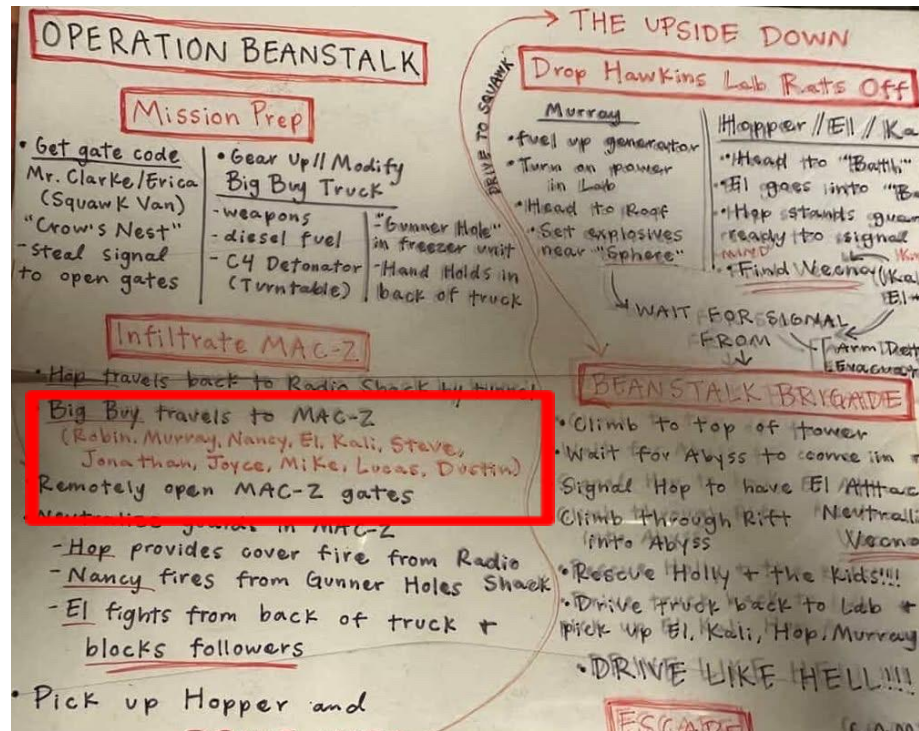
- The Duffers have regularly (until ep7 at least) demonstrated that they're following the concept of **Chekhov's gun**: a narrative principle, named after the playwright Anton Chekhov, that states that **every element in a story must be necessary and serve a purpose**. → Chekhov also wrote a play called **The Seagull**.
 - The seagull in the play starts off as symbolizing freedom → the whole epilogue is like a symbol of freedom (from Vecna, the UD, school, Hawkins, etc.)
 - Later on in the play, the seagull becomes a symbol of destruction at the hands of a loved one. (aka Will the Spy)
 - The Seagull is also about a play within a play. Much like how the First Shadow also was about a play within a play. And now the finale is like a fictional story within the tv show aka a play within a play.
- Mike & Will also parallel Peter Parker and MJ in Spiderman: No Way Home → a movie that ends with MJ forgetting Peter.



- Will ends up being erased/left out from most of the ending D&D montage despite the Duffers saying “this is a show about Will.”
 - One photo actually straight up removed Will from the shot altogether.
 - The photo also has some geometric shapes added in that conveniently match the shapes seen on Bronski Beat’s album cover for *The Age of Consent*: the album that includes **Smalltown Boy**. ([Original post.](#)) → For those who don’t know, *Smalltown Boy* is about a boy who wants to run away from his home town where he feels like he needs to hide his true self, particularly highlighting the experiences of the queer community, and it’s heavily associated with Mike.



- In the battle plans that the government finds at the WSQK, **Will isn’t mentioned AT ALL** with the rest of the group.



- During the montage that showed everyone's traumatic experiences from the UD and the Mind Flayer, Mike only remembers El disappearing the first time, even though he also had many other traumatic experiences that involved Will. (ex: seeing Will's body being removed from the water; trying to get Will back in the shed scene.)
 - When Will sees Henry's memories in the cave, he says the Mind Flayer didn't want Henry in the cave so that he wouldn't remember what happened. → The Mind Flayer doesn't want Mike to remember Will because Will might be the tether that can pull Mike back to reality.
- Gaten and Caleb joined Finn on SNL, and Noah did not, even though Noah was there for the show.
- Shawn Levy made [this Instagram post](#) on Jan 17 with a bunch of cast pictures. Only one of those pictures includes Noah (and his back is to the camera in that one).

Mike is the 5th Victim



- When Vecna first appears in ep4, **Mike spots him first and a clock chimes** → right before the epilogue happens, the camera is on Mike and then fades to black, **we hear a heartbeat, then a clock ticking, then the ticking blends into the construction noise.**
 - Clock chimes are used to symbolize Vecna's victims
 - When Max dies in S4 there are 4 chimes.
 - When the Abyss starts moving in the finale, there are 5 distinct chimes. → Mike could be the 5th victim.
 - Max has been regularly referred to as the "female version of Mike." (I kind of hate that wording but there are a ton of parallels between them.)
 - The Duffers are now saying the number 12 doesn't have any significance but... 12 is regularly used to symbolize time/clocks.
 - There were exactly 12 people at the graduation wearing sunglasses. → This could be alluding to the idea of having a distorted view of the world since sunglasses make everything darker.
- In ep1 Steve says that Vecna showed Nancy "her brother walking around with a big hole in his chest," referencing her vision of the end of the world in S4.
- Ep2 was teased as The Vanishing of ***** Wheeler & [Ross posted on his instagram](#) "yeah yeah you think you know who blah blah." → Maybe it could be Mike who truly went missing?
 - Max continuously compares Holly to Mike. She even says to Holly: "You ARE your brother."
 - Karen then teases this in ep8 when she calls Joyce to say she can't find Mike.
- In S3, there was emphasis on needing "two keys to close the gate." Before S5 premiered, there were a lot of theories about Will having powers and then Will & El being the "two keys."
 - In S3, Hopper also says "getting to Mike, that's the key." → Mike is especially important to both Will AND El so getting to him (kidnapping/trapping him) would be Vecna's key to winning.

- When Vecna comes into the MAC-Z, he throws Mike & the kids to the side and Mike is knocked unconscious. There is speculation that this could be the moment that Mike's trance started (either he's still unconscious or the events we're seeing happening aren't correct).
 - When Robin is talking about Will/Max/Holly and how they're all in the same place, she says **they all have one thing in common: that they're all unconscious.**
- In the S4 ending, Noah talked about how difficult it was to hit the right marks in the field. The shot we see has Mike exactly in the **center** of the screen.



- We've always been told "X marks the spot." → when Holly is looking for an escape route, she says **"M marks the spot."**
 - Well... his name isn't Xike.
 - Will's necklace in the epilogue almost looks like it could have an "M" on it.



- When the kids are escaping the cave in the finale, Holly says to the kids, "Eyes on me. Eyes on me." → That's exactly what Mike said to the kids in ep4.
 - This could just be a moment showing that Holly is his little sister and is a lot like him, but it could also be Vecna using Mike's memories of that moment again.
- In Will's coming out scene, the camera is consistently focused on Mike.
 - Also we see people hitting the classic Henry Pose™.
 - The floor looks like a chess board → In s4, when Henry is explaining his plan to El for them to escape the lab, they are playing chess.
 - Almost like that coming out scene depicts everyone like pieces on a chess board and Vecna is the one calling the shots.
 - Will says, "It felt so real. It felt so real." → The epilogue/ending feels very real... but it also feels off.

- Ep1: “When Will has a feeling, it means something.”
- The epilogue depicts almost exactly the kind of scenario Will said Vecna showed him in his coming out except it was about Mike, not Will.
 - When Will talks about his vision in ep7, he says, “Mostly you guys are worried about me then I push you away until I'm all alone.”
 - **“Mostly you guys are worried about me** then I push you away until I'm all alone.” → In the epilogue Will says to Mike, “What about the storyteller?”
 - **“Mostly you guys are worried about me then I push you away until I'm all alone.”** → Mike’s fear has always been the idea that the people in his life won’t need him anymore. This could be interpreted as needing him for help in some way OR needing his general presence in their lives.
- The epilogue shows Mike presenting a future where everyone seems happy but also a future where everyone moves on and leaves him behind.
 - Max & Lucas go on their movie date. → In S3, that was something they did with Mike & Will too.
 - Dustin craves knowledge so he continues his education. → The core four always loved school and knowledge all together but now Dustin is continuing that alone.
 - In S2 ep4, Mike specifically says that the next thing the team needs to do is “acquire more knowledge.” → They used to crave knowledge together but Mike is being left behind.
 - Will moves to a new city where he meets new people and finds general acceptance and happiness. → **Epilogue Boyfriend™ looks like Mike** and seems to be wearing a jacket similar to Mike’s from Vol.1.



- Mike however stays (or gets left) behind in Hawkins, writing stories about the past, and “the ones he can never tell.”
- We never actually got to see Will’s vision from Vecna - how weird considering that this is “a show about Will,” and we saw Vecna-induced visions for every other character who experienced them (including Hopper randomly even though it was so unnecessary in my opinion).
- In the final battle, Mike’s weapon is a flare gun. → Flare guns are used to signal distress.

- Thinking back to Max talking to Holly about how to get out of Henry's mind, Max says there are **3 options**:
 1. taking your own life (aka self-destruction)
 2. accepting your fate
 3. **finding a way to escape**
 - When Hopper is talking to Mike at the memorial, he says Mike has **2 options**:
 1. self-destruction "because that's what you think you deserve" (and also some hints of suicidal thoughts)
 2. accepting what happened
 - It seems like Vecna is removing the concept of escape or being saved from Mike's mind (Max's 3rd option). → Maybe Will is Mike's path to escaping.
 - There's an exit sign above Will's head when he's at the bar. → Another reference to the Truman Show & symbol of escape.



- Also many other times that exit signs show up in the epilogue like at Enzo's and the movie theater.
- Other moments of 3 becoming 2:
 - There were only 2 waterfalls seen in El's ending scene, not 3.
 - Dustin's new hellfire shirt now only has 2 dice on it when the original had 3 dice.
 - In his speech, Dustin says that there are 2 chaos classes: chaotic good & chaotic evil, but there's actually a 3rd: chaotic neutral.
- Mike gives the "Holly the Heroic" figurine to Holly and tells her about "Mike the Brave" and how he uses that persona to compartmentalize his emotions and not let anyone see that he's so scared all the time. → Holly's necklace breaks when she's fighting the other children, showing **how suppressing your emotions and fears to pretend they aren't real doesn't work**.
- Mike's demogorgon sweater & Mike's demogorgon tie. ([Original post.](#))



- Ep7, Kali looks directly at Mike while she says she “can follow [El] into [Henry’s] mind.”



- "This isn't like one of your campaigns, you don't get to write the ending." → El to Mike, but he quite literally did *write* their endings in the epilogue.
 - Finn also said this line is a spoiler for the finale.
 - "Comfort and happiness? Could you be more trite?" -Max about the end of the last campaign, and that's literally how the show ended.
- Mike has the crate that Robin uses to represent being trapped in your own mind in his dorm room.



- The movie that Robin references in her coded message in S5 ep1 is called The Whiz, a fantasy adventure film reimagining the Wizard of Oz which starred Michael Jackson as the scarecrow. → This ended up being “a colossal flop-a-roonie” (like how the finale & Mike’s character development ended up being a flop).

- **Michael** Jackson as the scarecrow, the character who wishes he could have a brain → i.e. could have critical thinking skills?
- Robin says “I still dig it. Give it a chance.” → Give the finale a chance because conformitygate could still be real!!!
- “Take notes. There will be a test later.” → Take notes on all the stuff you’re finding about conformitygate because you’ll need it to understand the next episode(s).

Will the Spy

- Will is regularly labeled with an “x” or as something that needs to be *found* - implying he is still central to the story as he always has been. If he’s lost somehow, it would explain why he was sidelined for most of the finale.
 - Will is shown in the center of the exotic matter with an X over his heart.



- If Will is lost, Mike is the one who’s always been good at finding Will.
 - S2 Ep2 - After pulling Will out of his vision on Halloween night, Mike says “I couldn’t **find** you.”
 - S2 Ep4 - When Joyce is running to Will on the field, Mike says, “I just **found** him like this.”
- Vecna tells Will that he will use Will as his spy again. “You were my spy. My **builder**.” - It seems a bit too simple that the only thing that came from that was finding Max’s location.
 - “All this time, we’ve been **building** it.” - Billy in S3
 - Vecna tells Will that he dug the tunnels while he was sleeping. In S2, when Will is sleeping, we see his eyes moving around a lot - the scene actually shows a flashback of that. → In ep6 ~12:40, when Will is unconscious, his eyes are moving in that same way again. Could he be **building** something else now?



- In ep4, all Vecna really does when he shows up at the MAC-Z is kill all the soldiers, he calls Will a weak ass bitch, and then he just... leaves. What's the point of that?
 - My original guess was that he was taunting Will to bring out his powers on purpose until I watched ep8 but it never amounted to anything.
 - Vecna could also have entered that situation on purpose to get to Mike?
- Will hits The Henry Pose™.



- Mike is never able to really touch Will following ep6 → There are several moments when he actively reaches for Will and then ends up not touching him. It's clunky and odd, like he's being blocked by a force field.
 - Max talks about how you don't need music to tether you back to reality, you just need something that evokes strong emotions → She then explains that she felt Lucas's hand when she was trying to escape the mindscape.
 - In S2 ep5, when Mike touches Will's hand, Will is able to use that hand to break out of the Mind Flayer's hold to tap morse code. → This possibly implies physical touch might be important here.
 - S2 ep2, Mike also is the one to pull Will out of his vision while they're out trick or treating. → If you watch closely, you hear Mike call Will's name, but he doesn't actually get pulled from the vision until Mike grabs Will's arm.
 - And again in S2 ep6, you hear Mike calling Will's name several times while he zones out when they're in the hospital but he finally comes back to himself when Mike grabs his arm.
 - If Vecna is using Will as his spy, and Mike touching Will would tether both of them back to reality, Vecna would actively keep Mike from being able to touch Will.
 - OHHHHHHHHHHH THIS THOUGHT I JUST HAD WHILE WATCHING EP1. In Vol. 1, Mike doesn't have any problems touching Will. But not just in Vol. 1, Mike also hugs Will (an actual genuine hug) in ep5 right at the beginning, and what happens? Will hugs Mike back and has this look of relief on his face as he says Mike's name.
 - This could be Will feeling happy that Mike is alive and that they're hugging but it could also be showing how Mike's touch pulls Will back to himself. I don't know

if this makes sense? Like no matter what's happening, Mike's touch is always grounding for Will.



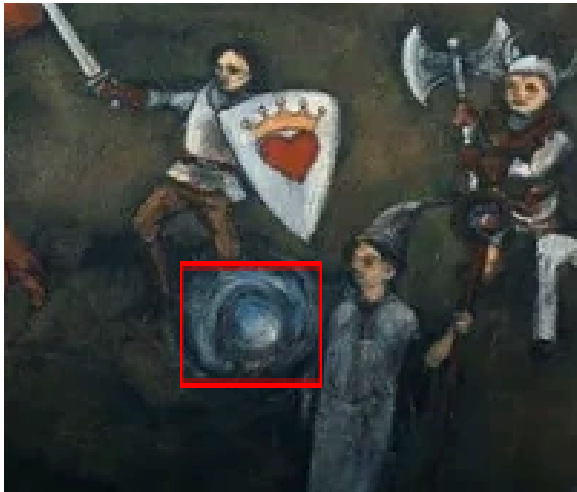
- It's only after this moment that we stop seeing any genuine physical contact between the two.
- Vecna tells the kids that they need to bring Holly "back to the light." → The kids start chanting this ominously (low-key Lord of the Flies vibes), turning a phrase that would be associated with something good into something very sinister.
 - Will is always depicted in the light, even when it doesn't have any apparent source. → Could be a byler thing because Mike is always in the dark... could also be a trick message.



- [This post](#) on Instagram with the caption "told ya. i don't believe in coincidences." shows the parallels of these scenes from S1 and S5. → Will isn't seen at all in the photo from S5, it almost looks like Max replaced him.



- Exotic matter in Will's painting?????? → If Brenner wasn't actually the one to create the UD like we were told, then we still don't know why it was frozen on Nov 6, 1983.
 - If Will is Vecna's builder, is he the reason for the UD looking like that? Is the exotic matter actually Will's power manifesting in the UD? (More about the exotic matter in D&D Imagery.)



Mike's Vision of El

- When Mike sees El standing in the gate and he starts to run to her, the soldier that grabs him calls him Mike. How would that soldier know Mike's name?
 - Apparently this also happened in the Truman Show with a police officer.
- The Duffers said it wouldn't be possible for El to bring him into the void because of the sirens. Why even bother saying that? Because the only other possible meaning behind that is they're just establishing that Mike is hallucinating because of his trauma.
 - If Mike truly is hallucinating, this scene in the van when Derek waves to Mike makes a bit more sense. → Mike is smiling, but no one is actually there, so Derek thinks Mike is smiling at him. ([This post by sterlingarcher23](#) has a lot of detail about this and more!)



- El says to Mike that he understands her better than anyone. → Maybe because he still doesn't know that Will lied during the van scene conversation.
- El also says that Mike always saw the real her, then the montage shows the scene from S1 ep4 where El is dressed up in her blonde wig and pink dress.
- After everything, Mike STILL couldn't say "I love you" to El even when she said it to him, and he **knew** she was **literally about to die**.
 - In the promotional series that involved the cast reacting to iconic scenes from the show, Finn reacted to the fight between Mike & El in S4 when Mike couldn't say "I love you." When watching it, Finn said, "He does love her. So why not say it?"

■ So why not say it? SO WHY NOT SAY IT? SO WHY NOT SAY IT?



- Mike said he doesn't want to have any regrets, and if he said he loved her, he would've regretted it because he doesn't mean it. (Trying to find the original post, stay tuned.)
 - She was literally about to die, Michael, you could've just lied. → "boyfriends lie" but he's not her boyfriend. He's just her friend. And "friends don't lie."

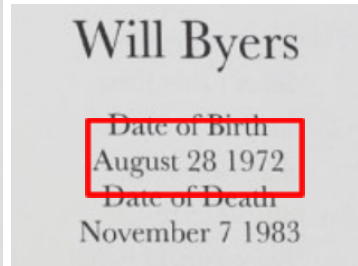
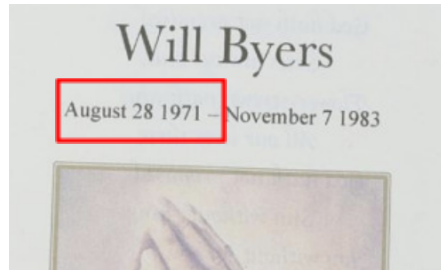
- Bruh, what do I even say about this? The pictures say it all.



- In general, nothing about any explanation of El's fate makes sense.
 - As the Duffers themselves pointed out, El couldn't have pulled Mike into the void because of the kryptonite.
 - Mike's theory is that El was able to run away while Kali used the last of her strength to make her invisible and then add in the vision of El in the UD to make everyone think she died. BUT in ep5, it was explicitly mentioned that Kali couldn't keep up the illusion of herself at the lab because she was too far away, and that's when she *wasn't* actively bleeding out.
- Been thinking about the implications of Mike literally being the one to build the bomb that kills El, and what that is supposed to mean. If El isn't actually dead/the story didn't actually end like that, it's another depiction of Mike being the reason that his relationship with El doesn't work. They can't have their happily ever after because Mike doesn't want that, so he'll always end up destroying it somehow.
- This vision of El also does make sense if you consider it portraying Mike's fear not just as losing El but as losing someone important to him because he wasn't able to stop them or do something about it. The whole time he's pleading with her not to do this but she does it anyway. He probably sees this as another example of how he lets down the people in his life.
- **Purple** rain is the song used in this scene. Recall how Dustin talks about how **violet** prismatic spray causes blindness in ep1.

Strange Things...

- **Birthdaygate** → Will's birthday is listed as Aug 28, 1971 on his [funeral program](#) but his birthday in the show was verbally stated to be March 22 (as we already know).
 - Henry's birthday is March 22.
 - This would also explain why no one remembered Will's birthday in S4, because it wasn't *actually* his birthday.
 - The year on the *inside* of the program is wrong though. It says 1972. → This also lines up with why Joyce says Will was taken at 11 years old, not 12.
 - Final conclusion: I actually have no clue what Will's birthday is supposed to be.



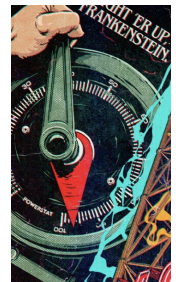
- When Dustin talks about using a bomb to collapse the bridge in ep7 ~36:00, the timer's numbers are running **counter-clockwise**. → The timer *could* look like this if it's been set to 1hr BUT in the scene, we see that Dustin sets the timer, it starts ticking, he re-sets the timer, **the timer rings**, and then Dustin slams it down on the table. **So why would the numbers be backwards?**



- This could also be a callback to *Eternal Sunshine*, a movie where Joel (who Mike so conveniently parallels) experiences memories in reverse.
- I can't explain it but this might be my favorite thing that I've noticed. It's so simple but so cool.
- Speaking of time moving in reverse, when looking at the S5 episode guide on Google, it shows the episodes in reverse order compared to other seasons.

Nov 26-Dec 31, 2025	May 27-Jul 1, 2022
8 episodes	8 episodes
 S5 E8 · Chapter Eight: The Rightside Up Dec 31, 2025	 S4 E1 · Chapter One: The Hellfire Club May 27, 2022
Vecna prepares to destroy the world as we know it, the party racing to stop him once and for all.	Having trouble with bullying at school, Joyce opens a mailbox and a scrappy new player shakes up D&D night.
 S5 E7 · Chapter Seven: The Bridge Dec 25, 2025	 S4 E2 · Chapter Two: Vecna's Curse May 27, 2022
On the anniversary of Will's disappearance, the party reunites to go home and bring Mike to California and a dead body brings Harlowe back.	Shaken Eddie tells the gang what he saw.
 S5 E6 · Chapter Six: Escape From Camazotz Dec 25, 2025	 S4 E3 · Chapter Three: The Monster May 27, 2022

- In ep5, Kali bleeds from the right side of her nose when it has ALWAYS been the left side.
- Robin pulls records from the shelf to symbolize characters. She uses those albums with songs that were explicitly associated with their character.
 - Max: Running Up That Hill
 - Holly: I think we're alone now...
 - Will: London Calling? → Why would she use London Calling for Will? Will's song has always been Should I Stay or Should I Go from the album Combat Rock.
- The dial at the radio tower changed from grey to red.
 - The [poster](#) for Shock Jock displayed that dial like it was a paid actor.
- Somewhere in vol2, watches and clocks stopped displaying the dates/times.



- Video footage used to show the date and time but that stopped in the epilogue.



- When the group is climbing the tower in ep8 around ~15:00, Mike is seen climbing to the top twice in a row.
- The epilogue is supposed to be 18 months after S5 ends. → S5 took place in the fall, meaning the epilogue would be in the late spring/early summer (let's say June). They're also literally graduating. High school graduations in the US happen in June.
 - So why does it look like fall in Hawkins?



- **Why is Mike wearing long-sleeves in June in the mid-western US?** Hopper is also in long-sleeves which we saw him wearing in S1&2 which took place in the fall, but in S3 which was in the summer, he had a short-sleeve uniform.
 - In fact, everyone is wearing long-sleeves and pants for the most part. Even those wearing short sleeves are still wearing pants or jeans, something typical for fall weather in Indiana but not for summer.



- The average temperature in early June in Indiana would be around 78°F to 84°F (25.5°C to 29°C) → definitely NOT jeans and long-sleeves weather. ~~I have never once in my life felt the desire to look up average temperatures in Indiana but here I am now.~~

- How does it make sense that this show went from being so meticulous and careful in their decisions that they actually had actors chewing ice during the S3 finale to keep their breath from showing because they were filming summer scenes in November to now not even caring to edit out the fall foliage in the epilogue?
- Steve is a baseball coach but he played basketball & was a swimmer. → Through Vecna's eyes, Steve was always seen with a baseball bat.
- Robin's headset doesn't have any wires or anything. I don't think I need to mention that bluetooth headphones didn't exist in the 80s.



- Hopper was able to get his job back as chief after everyone thought he was dead. → ...How?
- Someone in the graduation crowd is holding a yellow poster board with nothing written on it.
- In every shot of the main party, there is a person wearing glasses sitting directly behind their left shoulder. ([Original video.](#)) → Having that many people in a crowd who need glasses isn't impossible but it is very unlikely to happen.
- This poster behind Mike that seems to say "Wow Heiser." → **Michael S. Heiser** was an author most famous for his idea of the **Unseen Realm**: a supernatural worldview where God governs a Divine Council (lesser gods/spirit beings) that carries out His will. ([Source.](#))



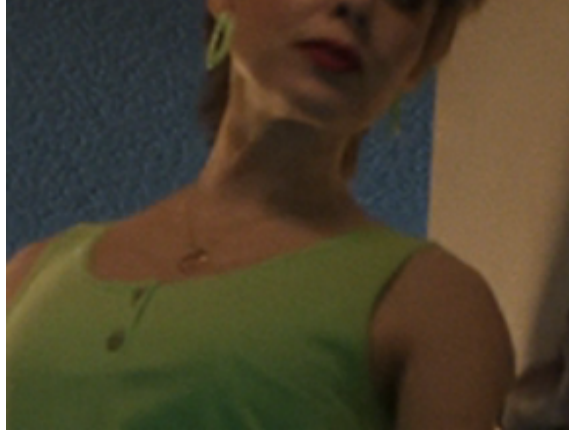
- Kind of sounds like how they described the Mind Flayer right? "He wants to conquer us."
- The Unseen Realm is described as a world parallel to ours but many of us live unaware of it. → Not to mention how the Unseen Realm is a parallel to how they described the UD in S1&2: the veil of shadows.

- The bible says ~~never thought I'd see the day where I'd actually use the words "the bible says"~~ that "there is an unseen realm built by **fear** and there is one built by **faith**; both are spiritual."
 - "I believe" → a symbol of faith.
 - The party repeating these words several times also feels like an eerie callback to the kids chanting "Back to the light."
 - Meanwhile, Mike's fear has always been ending up like his father and the idea that people won't need him anymore.
- Heiser's idea of the Divine Council in which God governs the cosmos through a council of divine beings, distinct from angels also reminds me of the Mind Flayer taking over "vessels" that carry out its work. → We never truly understood what the purpose of the children or the vessels really was. Maybe this helps us understand it more.
- Joyce and Hopper are at Enzo's, a super fancy restaurant, and they're wearing simple clothes → the same clothes that Vecna saw them in when he looked into Will's memories.
 - The meal they eat is not the same as the one they talk about in S4 (lasagna, breadsticks, and a nice bottle of Chianti). → Instead they ordered what a child/teen might think of as a fancy meal (caviar and steak).
 - Mike or Will never would have known that info about the meal choice because it was said in the church hideout in Russia.
 - The engagement ring looks suspiciously like the one Jonathan was going to give to Nancy which he showed her when they were trapped in the UD lab.
- On the door in Mike's basement, the doorknob was switched to the other side.



- Vickie isn't in the epilogue possibly because Mike doesn't know that she and Robin were dating so Vecna wouldn't know about that either. That could also be why Robin seems off in her outfit as well, appearing more feminine with long hair rather than her quirky, masc. clothes because Mike doesn't know she is gay (or in general just doesn't know her well enough to know what she would or wouldn't wear.)
- The Whatzit game appears several times in people's houses, including Hopper's cabin and also Mike's basement.
- Epilogue Boyfriend™ is named Carlton - Will and Carlton are the names of the **cousins** in The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.
 - "This is a story all about how my life got flipped, turned UPSIDE DOWN."

- Recall in S1 ep4 that Mike told Mr. Clarke that El (his supposed romantic interest) was his **cousin**, too.
- Steve in the epilogue drives a Chevy now even though he was always obsessed with his beamer (slang for a BMW).
- When Karen calls down to Mike, she's missing one of her scars, the one on her neck, that we saw in the graduation scene. (It could just be hard to see because of the shadow but I'm not so sure.)
 - I've also seen people say that the scars have been mirrored here, so they're still there but just facing the other way.



- Dr. Brenner is supposedly a really horrible artist but he also drew all these elaborate drawings and notes about the exotic matter.



- If the UD is just a wormhole that leads to Dimension X, and outside of the wormhole is the Abyss, and inside the wormhole is just Hawkins... **How & when did the Russians learn about the UD?** How were they able to try to access the UD from Russia? How did they get Mind Flayer particles and Demogorgons in Russia?
 - If the UD was actually created by Brenner just for the sole purpose of reaching Henry, how did the Russians find out about it, and why would they even care about it?
 - Do the Russians even know who Henry is? Was that their goal too? Or was their goal about reaching the Mind Flayer and harnessing the power of an interdimensional weapon? In which case that would bring me back to my original question, how did they even learn about it in the first place if it's a Hawkins-specific thing?

Forced Conformity

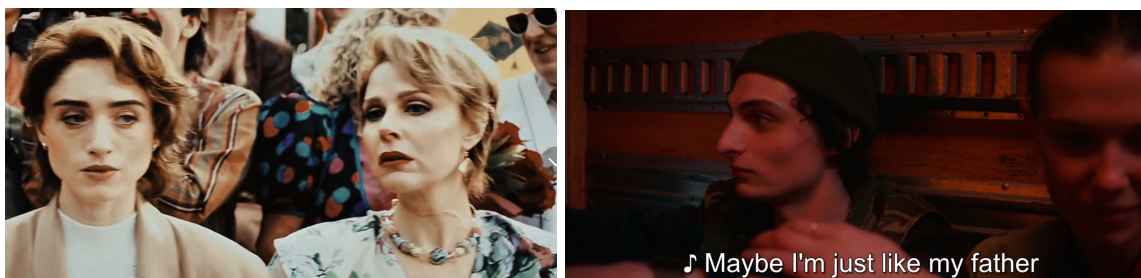
- In S4 ep1, Eddie says, "It's forced conformity. That's what's killing the kids." → The epilogue is basically just shot after shot of everyone conforming to social norms combined with more strange inconsistencies.
- A poster for Another Brick in the Wall by Pink Floyd is seen behind Mike a few times and also in his dorm room. → A song about forced conformity.



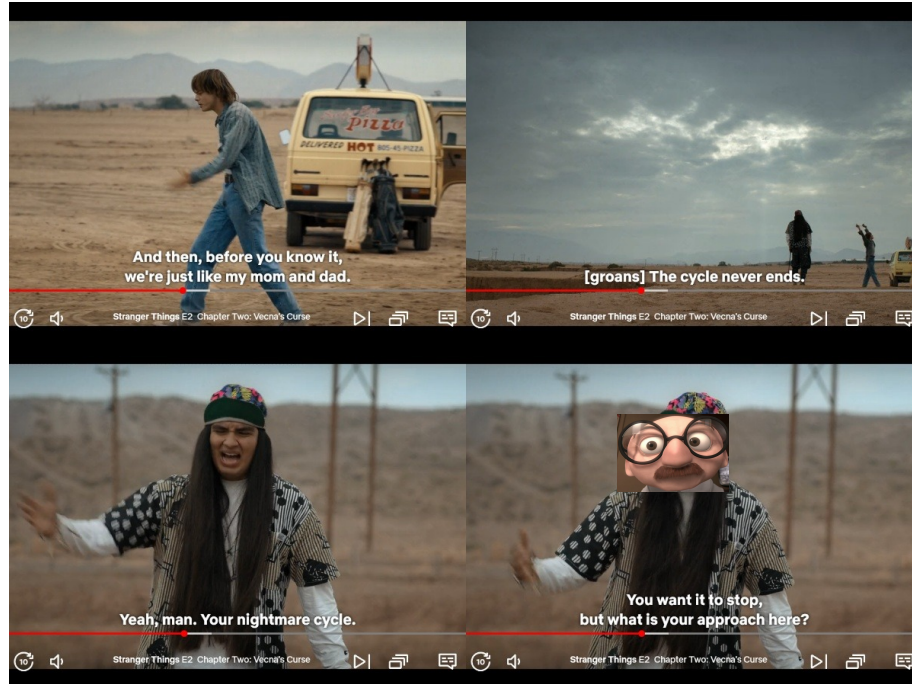
- People in the epilogue hit The Henry Pose™ again, including everyone at the graduation, even the people in the back. → Camazotz is also depicted as a setting where everyone behaves and acts the same way.



- Mike and Nancy end up looking a lot like their parents → Becoming their parents was something they both actively feared and never wanted.



- S4 equates a “Nightmare Cycle” to Jonathan ending up like his parents. → This whole conversation stems from Jonathan not being able to tell Nancy the truth. ([Original post](#))

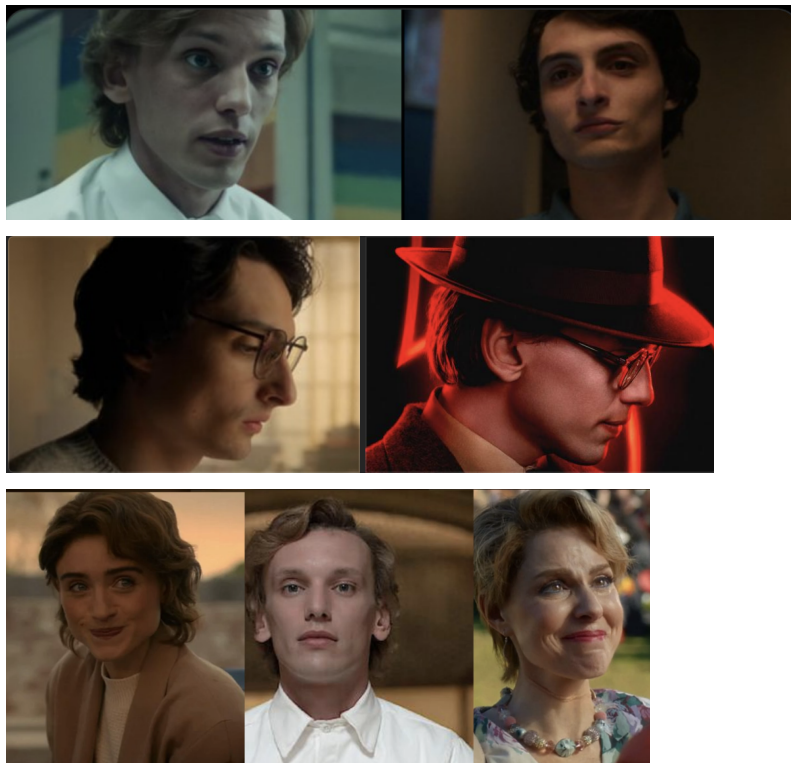


- Hopper says to Jonathan about the curtain falling, "It's not the Godfather." → The Godfather is a movie that ended with the main character, Michael, turning into his father even though he never wanted that.
 - Also this is an absolutely INSANE reference to make in this context because the plot of the Godfather is LITERALLY about Michael not wanting to get involved in the mafia like his father wants because he doesn't want to get caught in "a cycle of violence and betrayal."
 - As Jonathan is fixing the curtain, Hopper is yelling at him, "You get one more take! You get one more take!" - One more take, as in one more chance for a finale?
- Nancy takes a job at the **Boston Herald**, a newspaper that has always been extremely conservative. → Why wouldn't she want to work at the **Globe** which would be the liberal equivalent?
 - She says, "I thought I'd get out there and **try the real world.**" & She smiles at Jonathan when she says this as if she's saying to him now, "I decided to take a walk in your shoes." → Recall in S3 ep4 when they're fighting after getting fired from the Hawkins post, Jonathan is angry with her and tells her, "The real world sucks. Deal with it like the rest of us."
 - Jonathan tells her that the real world is unpleasant and something you have to "deal with," not really something you learn and grow from voluntarily. → It's really harsh when he says that to her, but... Now it's like a happy memory of a regular conversation they had?
- S2 ep6: Max says that she never wants to turn into her brother + S2 ep8: Billy says that he breaks things when he gets angry → Max gets mad at the end of Mike's campaign and breaks a bunch of stuff ([video link here](#)).

- Also, Will is shown smoking and drinking at a bar. → In ep3, he gets on Joyce's case about smoking, and Lonnie suffers from substance use disorder, specifically with alcohol. He also is wearing a leather jacket in that scene like Lonnie.
- Another situation of this "happy ending" not actually showing the characters experiencing the kind of life they wanted...
- Baseball is a symbol of forced conformity. → Baseball was what Jonathan used as an example of "normal things" in S1 ep1 when Lonnie was supposed to take Will to a baseball game but then never showed up.
 - "You shouldn't like things just because people tell you you're supposed to."
 - In Mike's dorm room, there's also a baseball glove even though Mike has never once been associated with any kind of sport or physical activity in general.



- Mike (and Nancy & Karen) actually also looks like Henry in the epilogue.



Breaking the Fourth Wall & Other Meta Details

- Lucas looks at the camera when he says "I don't know about you guys but I don't believe in coincidences."



- This season in particular really hammered in the idea of not having any holes or weak points in plans or ideas. Mike in particular was obsessed with making sure no one thought his plans had any holes in them. → But the season ended with 834 million plot holes.



- The order of the D&D books is changed in the show compared to what we see in BTS photos. → Will's book is purposefully placed next to Mike's in the show. In this photo, Will's book is in the middle.
 - Starting from the X in Max's name, the letters spell out "X a lie." (^Recall that one shot of Will where his face is circled and the X is placed over his heart.)
 - X marks the spot but X is a lie → M marks the spot, aka we were so focused on Will that Mike slipped through the cracks.



- People also pointed out this possible message when you put both images side-by-side:
Act II is a lie.



- Everyone thought Joyce was crazy with the Christmas lights in S1, and she ended up being right. Everyone thought Joyce was overreacting about Will's PTSD in S2, and she ended up being right. Everyone thought Joyce was being overdramatic about her magnets in S3, and she ended up being right.
- Throughout the epilogue, many characters look directly at the camera. → The most notable moment for me is when Hopper is talking to Mike around 1:30:35, he's seen looking at Mike one moment and then looking at the camera the next.
 - These two shots are taken a split-second apart, you literally SEE his eyeline shift towards the camera.



- Several moments in vol.2 & ep8 when the characters are saying something to the effect of "This isn't real."
 - The first thing Mike says in his vision of El is "You have to get out of there. You have to get out."
 - Holly - "Everything you see, none of it is real."
 - El - "This is just an illusion. This isn't real."
 - Joyce - "Whatever he showed you, it's not real. He plays tricks, he lies."
 - El - "Henry lied to you. He tricked you. He used you, and you fell for it."
 - **Lucas - "Is this real? Is Vecna messing with us again?"**
 - [This whole twitter post](#) is about that particular scene where Lucas and Robin are theorizing about Vecna messing with our heads & being in a trance.

- When talking about how there aren't any vines or monsters in Dimension X, Dustin says, **"We don't know what's going on in the mind."**
 - How interesting because they've never once shortened mind flayer or hive mind to just "mind." → Do they mean Mike's mind?
- After escaping the UD in ep7, Hopper says, "It feels like there's a missing piece of the puzzle. A big piece." (See Jan 7 - ST Puzzled Event is not over yet.)
- The video game Derek was playing in one of the episodes, named "Ghouls 'n Ghosts" has **a fake ending that tells its players that everything was an illusion** and that through the second time of playing is when the players get the real ending. ([Original post by sunkenwaterfallss](#))
- Playing ep8 in theaters further adds to the notion that this finale was a theatrical or "make-believe" performance. Netflix even refers to it as the "Stranger Things Series Finale **Theatrical Event.**" ([Source.](#))
 - The Duffers pushed really hard to get Netflix to let them show the episode in theaters, even after getting denied at first, but they didn't make ANY extra profit from it. ([Source](#))
 - "The move to screen the final episode of the hit series in theaters on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day turned into a big boon to theater owners due to an unusual arrangement of selling concession vouchers rather than actual tickets. That was because of complex contractual limitations with the show's actors and creators on streaming-to-cinema deals. **The result was that all the proceeds of the voucher sales went to the theaters, rather than being split with Netflix.**"
 - Other moments in ep8 also hint at the idea that what we're seeing is like a play or something that isn't real. ([Original post.](#))
 - Mike says he can't "walk the [graduation] stage."
 - Nancy says she wants to get out into the "real world."
 - Hopper says that moving to Montauk could be "something real."
 - Dustin says "That's not who I am. That's not who any of us are." in his graduation speech.
 - Even El's suicide looks like curtains closing on a play.
 - The finale has a slightly different intro theme and title animation.
 - Being tricked to watch a fake play within a play is literally the plot of First Shadow.
- The epilogue shows video cameras pointing somewhat towards the audience.



- Also...



- Mike is the only one looking at the camera in the vol. 2 character posters.



- [This whole post](#) about how the finale mocks the Game of Thrones finale by intentionally making all the same mistakes.
 - Defeating the bad guy too easily with weapons that were confirmed to not work before but now suddenly are enough to kill them.
 - The sudden death of the main female protagonist who never had a peaceful childhood.
 - The complete destruction of one of the main male protagonists that had him returning to his toxic relationship.
 - A rushed ending.
 - And so much more... go read the post!
 - In the comments, someone also mentions the controversial Starbucks cup that was seen in GoT that sparked a lot of hate on the show, similar to Holly's under armour logo that got edited out.

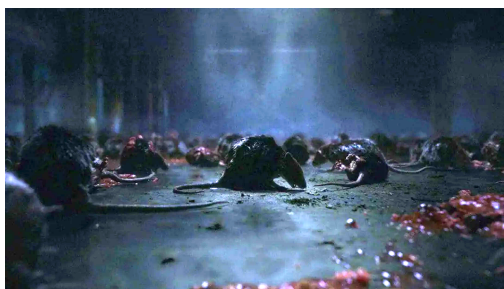
D&D Imagery

- The end of the show seems to parallel Mike's final D&D campaign at the end of S1. The other boys complain that the campaign was too short and didn't make sense.
 - Mike says "**it was 10 hours.**" → S5 ended up being about 10 hours long.

- The other boys start pointing out plot holes and inconsistencies that didn't make sense to them, much like the fans are doing now with the finale.
- The end of the show somehow simultaneously parallels the very first D&D campaign in S1 ep1. After 10 hours, the campaign was interrupted and they weren't able to finish.
 - Will supposedly gets defeated after rolling a 7 *even though we don't see it actually happen*. → Just like how we're not seeing Mike being Vecna'd.
 - Will gets taken right after that so the story remains unfinished.
 - When Karen interrupts, Mike says, "Mom, we're in the middle of a campaign." To which Karen replies, "You mean the end?"
 - That campaign also ended up being 10 hours long, actually about 10 hours and 20 minutes total since Karen interrupted them at 8:15 + the time it took for the boys to get on their bikes which is when Will tells Mike the outcome of his roll. → **S5 is exactly 10 hours and 20 minutes long.**
- The villain in Mike's final D&D campaign is **Strahd von Zarovich who is well-known for his high stats, spellcasting, and regenerative powers making him very difficult to beat**. → It seems like Vecna might be a parallel to Strahd here.
 - He likes to use guerilla style tactics and will sometimes not stay for the entire fight, leaving the party to fight smaller minions instead.
 - "At any given point, Strahd might wish to attack more thoroughly, and see how far he can take them. Strahd can be reckless and be less evasive than he should. Even to the point of starting to lose a battle. In fact **he can even lose a battle and eventually be turned to mist**. It doesn't matter, **he can just return to his coffin and reform**. There are several uses for this: First, you get a good fight. Second, **you give the PCs false hope that Strahd is not so difficult to defeat**, when in reality you're just not using him to his full capacity." ([Source](#).)
 - The party has to fight Strahd in his castle for it to have a chance of being a final boss battle; otherwise he will use his retreat and regenerate tactic over and over again. → Similar to how the team was able to actually hurt Vecna when he was in the Creel house.
 - Strahd is a vampire & one of the tactics used to weaken him is casting sunlight. → "He likes it cold."
 - Strahd's final weapon are his **four red dragons**. → We see these in Will's painting.
 - These "pillars" that were holding the kids sure looked a lot like dragon heads.
 - The dragons are meant to keep anyone from **exiting** Strahd's domain, they don't care about who enters though... → the kids never left the "hub" because the dragons wouldn't have let them leave.



- Mike says that Will travels to the town of Vallaki, which in DnD is described as “a fortified settlement in the Domain of Dread known as Barovia.” → Coincidentally, Barovia is the land that Strahd conquers and rules, known to the public as “the devil Strahd.” ([Source.](#))
 - “**Barovia was a prison** for its darklord, the vampire Strahd von Zarovich, as well as the entire population of the valley.”
 - Lore says that the burgomaster of Vallaki forces the inhabitants to hold a festival once a week even though the townsfolk are worried that it would incur the wrath of Strahd. However, “the burgomaster has deluded himself into believing that the only way for Vallaki to escape Barovia and return to the Prime Material plane was for him to make everyone **happy and hopeful.**” ([Source.](#))
 - The town is mostly inhabited by humans, but “some of the houses in the town were **infested with rats, who were servants of Strahd.**”



- [This post](#) talks about the theory that Mike making this mistake is because he has figured out that the world he’s living in isn’t real. → Will knows DnD lore inside and out, and he wouldn’t have accepted it if Mike made a mistake like saying that Will would be happy in Vallaki because that town is known for creating a sense of false happiness.

- There's a lot of speculation/discussion about what the monster in Will's painting actually is but another possibility is the false hydra. → a monster known to **manipulate memories and perception to create a false reality.**



- It can make people forget its existence and the victims it consumes through a psychic song, allowing it to grow by feeding unnoticed in towns, creating an unsettling mystery where characters notice missing people but can't recall who they were or why they're gone.
 - **“Even those closest to the missing won't remember they ever existed.”**
([Source](#)) → i.e. Mike forgetting Will/Will being erased.
- “The False Hydra’s song will cause people to **create new memories to make their new reality logical.**” ([Source](#))
- “A fight against a False Hydra should feel more like a desperate reckoning than a typical combat encounter. It begins not with swords drawn, but with memory restored.”
([Source](#))
- D&D guides mention **“plugging your ears”** as a start to defeating the False Hydra.
([Source](#)) → Who do we know who often plugs or covers his ears during intense moments?

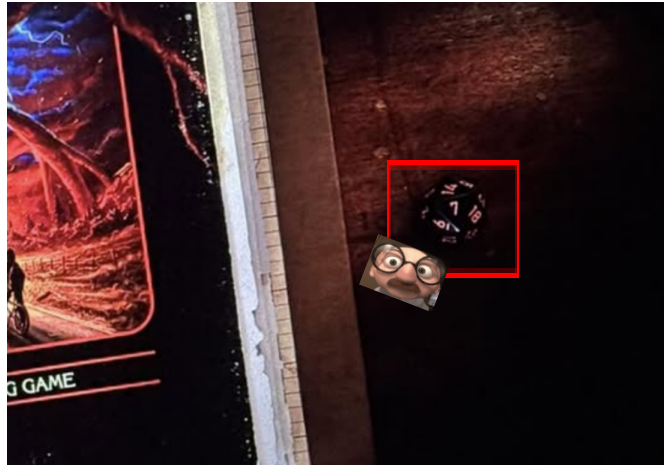


- “A spell like **True Sight** will allow the caster the ability to see through the hydra’s song.”
([Source](#)) → The party refers to Will’s vision powers as True Sight.
- **Kas the Betrayer** aka Will: Kas is a human who was Vecna’s “General” before betraying him, also known as The First Vampire or Kas the Bloody-Handed. ([Source](#).) → Recall in ep4 when Vecna tells Will that he was the first and that he showed Vecna what was possible.
 - In DnD lore, Kas betrays Vecna, tearing out his left arm and one of his eyes before Vecna strikes him down and nearly kills him. → Will rips off Vecna’s left arm in the final battle.
 - In Eddie’s campaign, the team thought they killed Vecna at first and Mike yells out that Vecna was killed by Kas, also known as Kas the Betrayer, until Eddie reveals that Vecna is alive and missing his left arm and his left eye.

- The Eye of Vecna and the Hand of Vecna become powerful artifacts that can corrupt anyone who uses them. → The Eye grants truesight to its wearer, and the Hand grants the user supernatural strength, and if attuned to the same creature, **there is a chance that Vecna will eat at the user's soul and take control of that character.** ([Source 1](#). [Source 2](#).)
 - The only way to destroy the Eye and the Hand is to attach them to the same creature and then slay that creature with the Sword of Kas. ([Source](#).)
- The **Sword of Kas** is a sentient longsword that Vecna gifts to Kas, which he uses to attack Vecna in an attempt to usurp him. → The sword in this scenario is Will's powers, which Will uses in ep5 to try to kill Henry.
 - After that attempt, Will gets knocked out and Vecna has him trapped in the UD (in his mind) where he supposedly forces Will to see all the unpleasant visions he talks about in ep7. → This also follows DnD lore in which after Kas gets struck down, "he vanishes from the mortal world, said to have ascended—or descended— into the Shadowfell or another forgotten plane."
- The choreographer for a lot of the fight scenes is wearing this shirt in the documentary with a **picture of Will holding his left eye and his left hand looks like Vecna hand covered in blood**, and the words underneath say "Possession... is just the beginning..."



- TikTok added an animation to one of their videos where if you type "I believe" into the comments, a d20 pops up and rolls to an 11. → In the last minutes of Eddie's campaign, Dustin rolls an 11 before Erica takes Vecna out with her nat20.
- The very end of the final montage shows the D&D players manual with a very small die next to it. → The number on the die is 7.
 - "It was a 7. The demogorgon, it got me."



- References to **Thirazdun**, the god of Eternal Darkness, Decay, Entropy, Malign Knowledge, Insanity, and Cold. → He created the **Abyss** and was later imprisoned there as punishment.
 - It's possible that it's actually Thirazdun behind the evil in the show, we just haven't confirmed that yet. → We never really did discover Vecna's/the Mind Flayer's goal in all this beyond "take over the world."
 - Eternal darkness & decay & cold → all words used to describe the UD.
 - Possibility that the Mind Flayer is actually Thirazdun: an **amorphous, roiling pitch-blackness**, very similar to the concept of the Mind Flayer as a shadow monster.
 - Being imprisoned in the abyss made him go insane and he wasn't able to communicate except in the form of "a shrieking babble that was impossible for mortals to comprehend." → The shadow Mind Flayer in S2 never actually spoke but was always associated with a sort of shrieking sound of flowing energy.
 - In creating the Abyss, Thirazdun "planted a seed of evil in a primordial expanse of the churning Elemental Chaos" and the seed eventually grew into the Abyss. → Sounds a lot like that's describing the exotic matter which definitely looks like a seed of evil and churning chaos. ([Source.](#))
 - **Thirazdun's symbol is called the Spiral of Decay** and looks a lot like the mandala that Robin and Will stumble upon in ep2 AND the exotic matter. → Recall how Robin says mandalas are supposed to be concentric circles and not spirals.



- Entropy is a fundamental concept in chemistry & thermodynamics that is all about disorder or "chaos" in a system. → Like the chaos that Dustin talks about in his graduation speech and like the swirling chaos of the exotic matter.

- The **Demiplane of Imprisonment** where Thirazdun is actually held resembles a swollen crystalline cyst that is nearly a mile in diameter that surrounds the demiplane. ([Source](#).)
→ Sounds like the flesh wall.
 - Demiplanes are ill-defined extra-dimensional pockets of reality, often like a small, private world created by powerful magic or existing naturally as a fold in the multiverse, accessible through portals. → The UD is like a small, private version of Hawkins.
 - Demiplanes are usually still in the formation process and somehow unfinished. They can occur naturally or be created by casting the spell **Genesis** which only creates **barren, lifeless demiplanes** in which life has to be added by other means. ([Source](#).) → It could be possible that Will was the one who “cast” Genesis and **built** the UD when he was first taken, since we know El banished Henry directly to Dimension X, not the UD.
- Thirazdun’s holy number is 333 aka the angel’s number. ~~That’s ironic.~~
 - The **333 Gems of Thirazdun** are essentially “fragments of his essence” and are one of his artifacts. → These gems are fist-sized stones that enable his scions and servitors to unlock the shackles that bind him in the Abyss.
 - This description resembles the stone that Henry found in the cave.



- In the third edition, Thirazdun’s divine rank is 11 (out of 20).
- Thirazdun’s clerics cannot draw power unless they are in contact with an artifact such as these. ([Source](#).) → Will the Cleric??? And Will also siphons his powers from his proximity to the hive-mind?
 - This also implies that Henry is a “cleric” but since the gem fused to him in the cave, he is *always* in contact and able to siphon Thirazdun’s power.
 - His clerics’ ultimate goal is to free their dark deity from his prison, and they will often conduct foul rituals including human sacrifice. ([Source](#).) → Vecna using human sacrifices to open the gates in S4.
 - His clerics traditionally wear black or **purple robes**, but clerics of his aspect, the Elder Elemental Eye, typically wear **ochre-colored robes**.

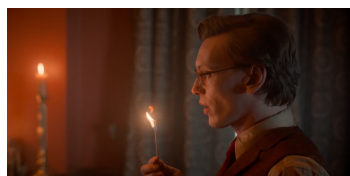


Color Imagery

- Grey can be associated with ambiguity, melancholy, boredom, or even **conformity**. → Some items were changed to grey.
 - Dustin's hellfire shirt.
 - The center of the playground spinny thingy (idk what it's called). I have been informed that it is called a merry-go-round.
 - This might be a stretch but I can't stop thinking about Halloweentown 2 when the villain casts the grey spell over the town to get rid of the happiness, joy, and magic in the town and turns everything grey.



- Orange can be associated with signaling something hazardous or requiring caution.
 - Traffic cones; construction worker vests; caution tape (sometimes).
 - Hopper was one of the soldiers who worked with Agent Orange in Vietnam, and we know how this led to his daughter developing cancer and dying.
 - Henry is often associated with the color orange as well.



- There are quite a lot of moments where orange starts to pop up when it never really has in the show before, or colors of certain things are changed to orange.
 - Will's orange hoodie in ep7&8.
 - The graduation robes.

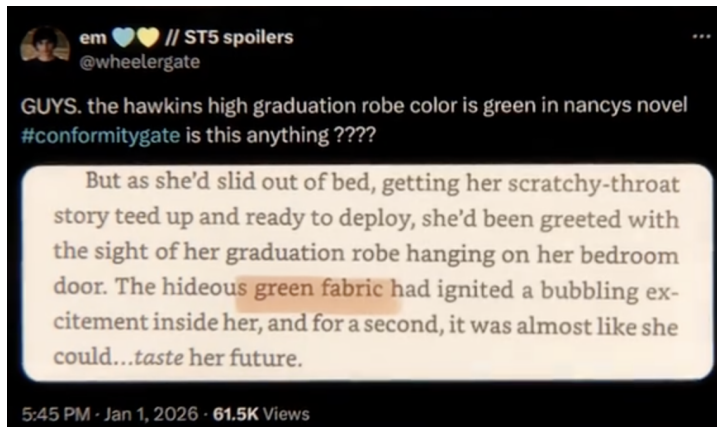
- In the final battle plans (see above in Manipulating Memories), titles and steps are outlined in orange.
- Orange curtains at the WSQK.
- In the latest promotional photoshoot, Finn is wearing a sweater vest with prominent orange stripes (I talk about that sweater more later in Promotional Content.)
- Mike's basement rug changes from blue to orange.



- Dimension X feels quite... orange.



- Dustin's final shirt in the epilogue is also orange which always felt very strange to me and I couldn't place why. → What if Dustin (and maybe even Steve) dies in the actual finale?
 - "You die. I die."
 - Robin tells Steve that he "smells really bad. Like really bad." + Derek says at the very end "It smells like rotten pizza" while sitting in the same seat that Dustin was sitting before → the smell of a **rotting** dead body is really difficult to escape...
 - In S2, when the pumpkins are rotting, Office Callahan says "it smells like a nursing home." → In Will's coming out scene, he says Mike's basement has an old-person smell.
- Nancy's book specifically mentions the graduation robes being green.



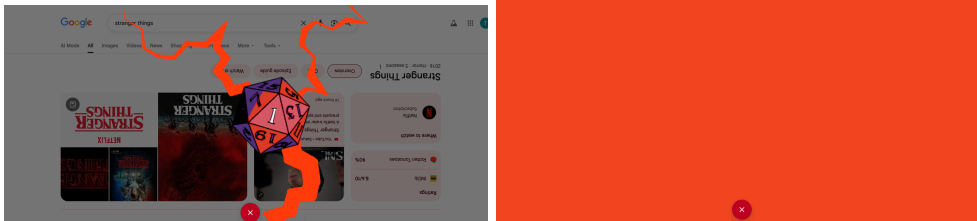
- Orange is also the well-known color of prisoner uniforms. Not sure if that really matters but that was my very first thought when I saw them in their robes. (“Jeez they look like prisoners” is exactly what I said out loud.)
 - When the party is standing together, Lucas is the only one with his robe still zipped shut. There is speculation about how that could point to a dark end for Lucas. (i.e. he’s trapped as a prisoner or in other words, he dies.)
 - Caleb made a joke in an interview about how “his finale is different from everyone else’s.”
 - There are parallels between Mike & Lucas in general. → “Why can’t there just be two Venkmans?”



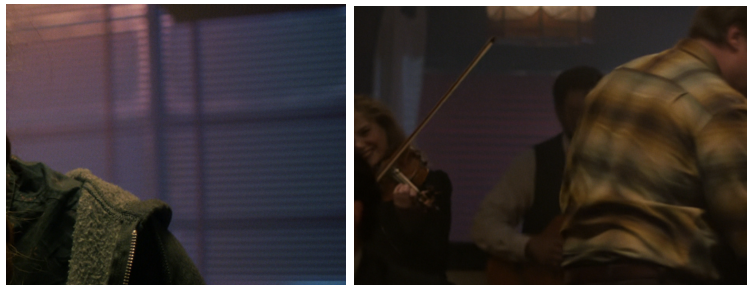
- In ep5, Steve plays with a rubik’s cube in the lab in the UD and turns an entire side to yellow with some spots of orange in it.
 - Yellow = Will, orange = Henry → Will’s mind is being infiltrated by Henry.
- On Mike’s D&D book, there is a large “M” that is half-filled with orange, while on Will’s book, it is the same letter but flipped upside down (obviously because it’s a “W”) and fully filled with orange.
 - Dustin, Lucas, and Max’s books don’t have orange like that on their books.



- Also, Mike's "M" is yellow and Will's "W" is blue, pairing them up with each other's respective colors. But Lucas' "L" is green and Dustin's "D" is purple.
 - Lucas and Dustin are independent characters.
 - Mike and Will are innately :) linked to each other.
- On the spines, Dustin's name is in yellow while Will's is in orange even though **Yellow is always strongly associated with Will**.
- On Jan 19, Google brought back the animation of a d20 that cracks the screen and turns everything upside down again. I THINK when the animation was originally there, around Dec 31 - Jan 7ish, the screen would crack and turn **red**. → Now the screen turns **orange**.



- During Hopper's proposal, the lighting outside is blue&purple. → The same lighting that we see outside the WSQK when Max enters her "dream state" in ep8.
 - In the final campaign, Mike says a **purple light** shines before the Mage of St. Markovia emerges.



Documentary

- The [poster](#) for the documentary shows many different cast members but for some reason, Finn, Millie, and Noah are the only ones circled in red.
- The documentary actually included discussion about the plot holes seen in ep8 but no resolution to those discussions.
 - Demo-fatigue
 - Paul Dichter: There have to be some monsters in the Abyss.
 - Matt: I agree.
 - Paul: There has to be Demogorgon, bat, dog like something. It's crazy if there's nothing there, I think.
 - Matt: Hm.
 - El's ambiguous ending

- Patty mentioned by JCB himself!!!!!!
- Trusted writers like Kate Trefry (The Spy, The Sauna Test, The Nina Project) and Paul Dichter (Will the Wise, Dear Billy, Sorcerer) are out here saying shit like “There’s some demo-fatigue.” Give me a fucking break.
- Emphasizing how strange it is that they went into production without having finished scripts for S5 but... that is standard practice for television shows. **It is actually incredibly uncommon to go to production with fully finished scripts.** Having drafts/an unfinished ending allows the writers/directors to make changes as they go if they want to.
 - They even call to attention how they did the exact same thing for S1 when they talked about how Shawn Levy stepped up as a director to let the Duffers finish writing the season, but it’s only made out to be a strange thing (pun not intended) when talking about S5.
- Odd lines that are explicitly stated but are contradicted by what happens in the finale.
 - Legendary director Frank Darabont (Shawshank Redemption, The Green Mile, Walking Dead S1&2) says, “Matt and Ross do not write simple scenes.”
 - “You can’t leave anything dangling. You have to wrap everything up.”
 - “You have to keep toying with the audience.”
 - “The audience will never know that we failed today.”
 - “Not that we’ve ever half-assed anything on this show.”
 - “The foundation of the show is built on trust.”
 - “You see these shows that people love and adore, and the ending falters, and they just discard the rest of the show.” → **This tweet sums up exactly my thoughts on it.**



nadja @pantostado3333 · 48m



Replying to @pantostado3333

So I was right to think that it would be a mockumentary because of the "just discard the rest of the show" line, no one is so moronic to leave 80+ inconsistencies and unanswered questions and still say this with so much confidence they KNOW they're saying bs

- On El’s fate:
 - Ross: You have to keep toying with the audience. Like “is she really going to go through with this?” And it’s what everyone’s gonna keep expecting.
 - Matt: We think she’s made the choice to live.
 - Ross: I don’t know - just kidding. She hasn’t.
 - Kate: Just kidding. She has.
 - Matt: That’s where I start.
 - Ross: I don’t know if we have to play it like that.
- On El deciding to die by suicide: “I know we’ve talked about all the trauma she’s experienced, and you have to be able to move on from that.”

- Maya says that she wants her lines with Vickey in the laundry room to be a whisper and Shawn approves it. → So you're telling me, they're supposed to be hiding from the demo-dogs, and the script didn't already have her whispering? I don't believe that for one second.
- Finn????



- Shawn asks Natalia if she thinks Nancy should swear because he's never heard Nancy swear before. → Kidding me? "Bullshit" is Nancy's tagline at this point.
- "Episode 8 is red. Red for red alert."
- Took a closer look at this shot of the script being written that includes details about WILL fighting the mind flayer. I did my best to transcribe what I could see:

Abyss

The monster ROARS in anger at Will - charges -

Abyss

Will faces - mind flayer - which is charging him - ...[too blurry]

Inside the pain tree

The rib cages begin to rip open inside -[too blurry]

Will pulls apart the inner workings of mind flayer - revealing Vecna - pulling him OUT of the protective rib cage - ripping those vines out and -

Abyss

The mind flayer SLAMS DOWN to the ground in front of Will ...[too blurry]

Abyss

Will drops to the ground at the same time - exhausted and bleeding and -

Canton

The teens can't believe it.

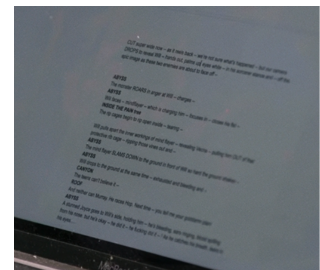
Roof

And neither can Murray. He races Hop. Next time - you tell me your ...[too blurry]

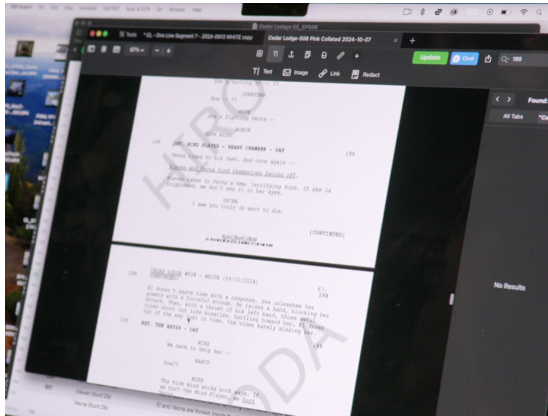
Abyss

A stunned Joyce goes to Will's side, holding him - he's bleeding, ears ringing, ...[too blurry] than his nose, but he's okay - he fucking did it. ...[too blurry]

- So they really showed a close-up shot of a script for a scene that didn't happen?



- All these conversations that happened in the writer's room or among groups planning with the Duffers just feel SO scripted as opposed to the rest of the documentary that feels like genuine footage of the film-making process.
- The Duffers very clearly have Reddit tabs open on their computer with a close up of their screens. → The Duffers specifically said they would stop consulting Reddit and go back to what they wanted to write.
- So you're telling me that these scripts are so top secret they are literally watermarked with people's names but here we got Matt and Ross's assistant handing out ep8 scripts like candy?



- No interviews with any of the cast even though we know they did them.
- Jan 12 is here. The documentary is out. It's been 12 days since the ep8 dropped. **Why haven't we gotten any substantial interviews with the cast about the finale?**
 - The only finale content we've gotten so far has been pre-recorded during the November promotional period but that doesn't line up with statements that no one had seen the finale yet besides the Duffers/Shawn Levy/maybe a couple other people, not even the main cast.
 - The cast watched the finale for the first time on December 31 during the day.
- So the documentary is out but none of the cast have posted about it on social media? Not even one singular Instagram story?
- Diet Dr. Pepper spotted. That man is NOT to be trusted.



- [In this interview](#) with Variety, Charlie stated: "I was sitting in front of Noah and Finn. I assumed it might get emotional. But 20 minutes in — and we're not even a third into the script — Noah is bawling his eyes out, like deep sobs. And then Finn was crying," Heaton, 31, explained. "That really set everyone off." → In the footage of the cast at the final table read, Finn and Noah are on opposite sides of the room.

- [This parallel](#) between Nancy & Murray's news story arc in S2 and creating Nancy & Jonathan's goo room.
- Honorable mention for Noah & Finn's matching sweaters.

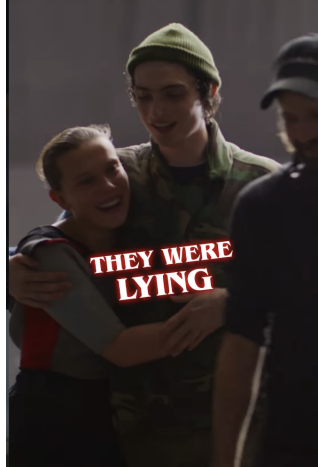


Behind the Scenes

- The documentary shows JCB's final scene as Vecna at the "pain tree" but a crewmember shared [this video](#) showing everyone celebrating JCB's last day in the lab in the UD, which would be a completely different set.
- This BTS video for ep8 posted on Instagram with some very questionable decisions on captioning only certain lines of dialogue.
 - Caleb says "Sadie look at me" while emphasizing his shirt. → BUT WHAT'S WEIRD IS THAT IN THE DOCUMENTARY CALEB DOESN'T SAY "**LOOK AT ME**" HE SAYS "**DON'T GET ME**"
 - On Mike & Lucas, Lucas looks like he's wearing a "Mike" shirt in the epilogue: blue & yellow with a collar. → Maybe hinting at how Lucas got the happy ending with Max that Mike wanted?



- Finn says "They were lying" after they finish filming the scene with Mike & El in the void



- Millie says “You guys can act!” → Unsure what this is about but feels like it would be pointing towards the cast acting something that is really strange or doesn’t make sense.



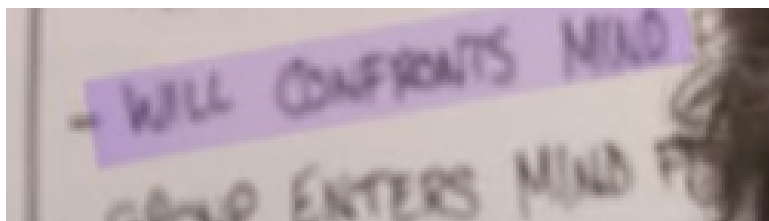
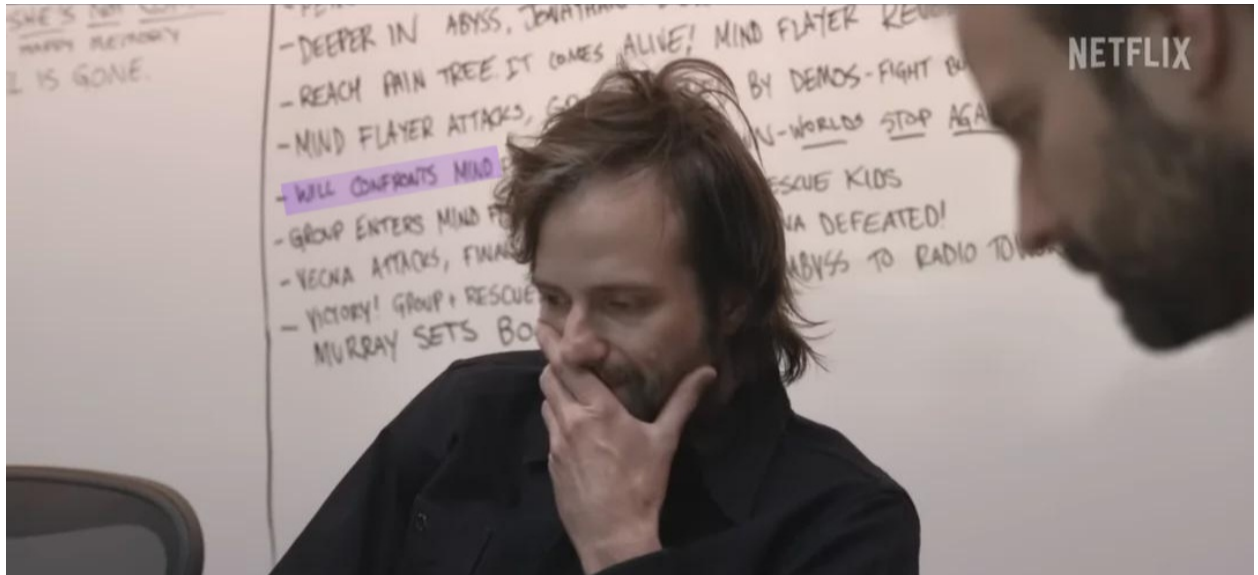
- Charlie shouts “Mike! Get up here!” which could be referencing the scene on the radio tower where you can see Mike climbing to the top of the stairs **twice**.



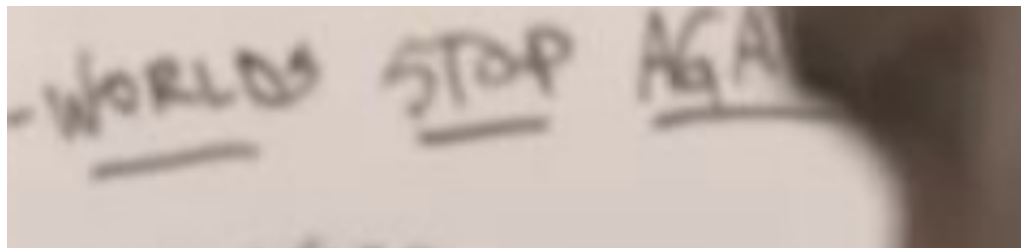
- Millie says “It’s been a while!” to Sadie with a hug while filming at the WSQK. → When El and Max reunited, they didn’t even hug, and it seemed like they had already seen each other before this.
 - El says, “You’re really here.” → As if she saw her recently in the void.



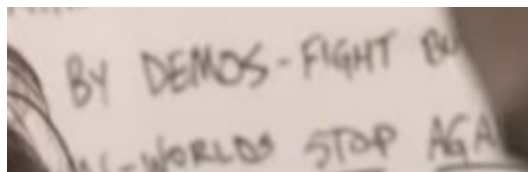
- The mother of the actor who played Young Will in ep4 posted this story on Jan 5 of him supposedly filming something where special effects needed to be added. → The “room” that he’s in is used for shooting when a lot of special effects are needed for a particular moment.
 - There weren’t ANY moments with special effects in the tape montage in ep4. This could be pointing to the idea of Mike traversing across his memories to find a way out his vision/trance like Max did. It would make sense that he would encounter young Will along the way.
- In the [video](#) that Netflix just released to tease the Stranger Things documentary, there is a shot of the Duffers sitting in front of a whiteboard with notes about the show. One of the bullet points says “Will confronts the Mind Flayer” but that never happened in the show.
 - Of course, not everything that’s thought of will make it to the final cut, but this seems like an awfully big thing to leave out.



- Will DID confront the villain twice in the show, in ep5 and ep8, but both times he was confronting Henry/Vecna. → There's always been a distinction between Henry/Vecna and the Mind Flayer as two separate villains so why would they stop making that distinction here?
- The notes of that same bullet point say “Worlds stop again” and are underlined. We’ve only seen the two worlds begin moving and then stop just that one time in ep8.



- There's also a note about demos fighting them, but there were no demo—anythings in the entire final battle. → When originally asked about this, the Duffers made it a point to say the demos weren't there because Vecna didn't know the group would be attacking him until they were already there.



- In this video, we also see the cast/crew reading from scripts on white paper, but the cast talked about how the final episode scripts were red. You also see Matt Duffer in the video say the words “End series” when they’re reading from the white scripts, so it’s not just a voice over.



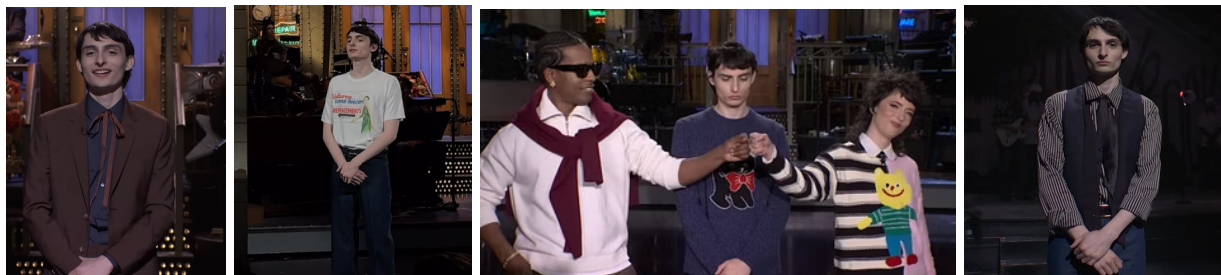
- I have learned that a possible explanation for this is that in filmmaking, even if red scripts are being used, there are white scripts printed for the table reads because it is easier to cold-read from a white page than a red page but those white scripts are then immediately shredded afterwards. “_(‘▽’)_/” who knows...
- Joe Keery suggested using the original David Bowie version of Heroes in the credits. ([Source.](#)) → Is it because it’s a song they felt like using OR is it because we’re seeing **another** situation where Mike thinks he lost Will?
 - Thinking about it in this context, it’s an interesting choice since the same cover of Heroes (by Peter Gabriel) has been used twice before.
 - Now it can be seen as one more thing that’s been **changed or feels off**.



- S5 began filming on Jan 9, 2024 and finished on Dec 20, 2024 according to Ross Duffer’s instagram posts. ([Start](#), [finish](#).)
 - Total time spent filming: 346 days OR 59 weeks.
 - Ross Duffer made Instagram posts every 1-3 weeks or so during that year up until Aug 15 when he suddenly stopped. → His next post was on Dec 20 when they wrapped.

Promotional Content

- Top SNL moments - there were tons of very *subtle* references to the idea of conformitygate and the show that I originally had here, it's hard to tell if it's supposed to be hinting at something or if it's just the Queer Finn agenda. → [This post](#) has a good summary though.
 - SNL used a different warm-up song for the first time in 13 years. → That song was “Let’s go **crazy together**” by Prince.
 - [Heated Wizardry](#): Finn as Gay Harry Potter in love with his best friend. → Strange choice since it’s a parody of Heated Rivalry which is about two rivals getting together, so why wouldn’t they portray it as Harry & Draco?
 - “You’re a homo, Harry.”
 - Honorable mention for this movie review from Noah.
 - [Mike in Manhattan](#): part of a ST parody specifically for Mike’s ending where he moves to NY to keep writing. Dustin and Lucas meet up with him there. → Mike’s nose starts bleeding at one point.
 - Conformitygate shout out.
 - Some people are pointing out how Finn was dressed similarly to Mr. Whatsit in his opening monologue and was hitting the Henry Pose™ a few times. (Not sure how much I buy into this but I’ll include it anyway.) ~~These lowkey look like mug shots.~~



- A\$AP Rocky performed in front of a wall spraypainted with “Punk Rocky.” → The font and placement of the letters resembles **Pink Floyd’s The Wall** poster.
 - Another Brick in the Wall Pt. 2 was one of the songs included on the WSQK vinyl that didn’t end up being in S5, and multiple Pink Floyd The Wall posters show up in the show, usually behind Mike and also in his dorm room.
 - Winona Ryder was also in [the music video for Punk Rocky](#).



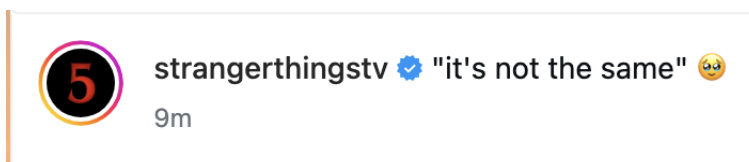
- [This post](#) from Netflix Brazil on Jan 16 with the caption “Passei” (Passed). → Reference to a national test in Brazil which released its scores for students on that day.

Área de Conhecimento	Nota	Situação
Stranger Things, Códigos e suas Teorias	820, 8	Presente

- Translation:
 - Knowledge Area: Stranger Things, Codes and Theories
 - Score: 820.8 (out of 1000)
 - Status: Present
- A score that’s very good but not perfect...
- 820.8 → Aug 28? Will’s actual birthday?
- Matthew Modine posted [this video](#) of himself dressed like Dr. Brenner and walking into a room labeled “11” on Jan 13.
- The caption on [this post](#) by Cinespace Studios in Atlanta where the series was filmed:

Don't miss the final two episodes
premiering tonight on @netflix
#StrangerThings #Seriesfinale
December 31, 2025

- Netflix is selling [merch](#) for Hawkins class of ‘87. The party is class of ‘89...
- Latest Stranger Things instagram [post](#) on Jan 7 is a reel of Robin talking on the rooftop in the epilogue with this caption:

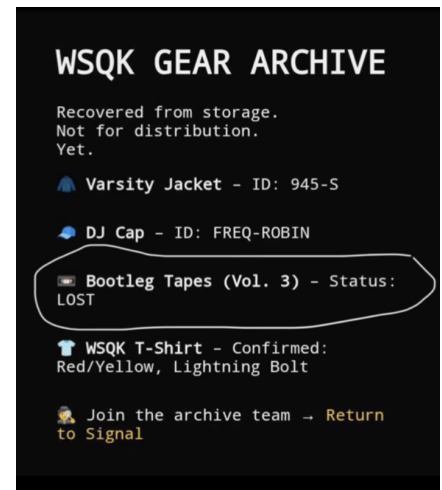


- 20 days before Vol. 1 aired, Netflix posted a [video](#) of Finn rolling a d20, and the die seemingly landed on 20. But when you look at the surrounding numbers—7, 19, & 13—you see that it’s actually not a standard D20. → On a standard d20, these surrounding numbers correspond to a nat1.

- Not all d20s are exactly the same, but assuming he was using a **standard d20**, it looks like he would've won with that roll when actually he would've lost.



- The [WSQK Gear Archive](#) used to be a website where you could buy official merch. → If you go to that website now, you see this image below that says the tapes for Vol.3 have been lost.
 - This could be related to the fact that [ep5-8 of S5 are not registered with the EIDR](#). → The EIDR is an archive for the media industry to standardize tracking and sharing of metadata for various media assets. ([Source](#).)
 - There's a lot of miscommunication going around about this being a legal requirement for the episodes to be considered "officially part of S5." → That is NOT true and not how that works. It seems like people are conflating external registration with EIDR & internal registration within Netflix. (I'm referring to [this video](#) on Twitter.)
 - To help understand this better, I wrote up a little True/False chart:



True	False
Episodes 5-8 of S5 have not been registered with EIDR.	Episodes 5-8 of S5 have not been registered at all.
EIDR is an archive tool for standardizing the process to share metadata for media assets across companies.	Episodes must be registered with EIDR to be legally released or to be considered "official."
If episodes aren't registered with EIDR, it means the metadata has not been locked in and shared externally.	If episodes aren't registered with EIDR, it means Netflix doesn't legally own them and cannot profit from them.
Netflix's internal ID system is what determines if an episode is officially considered part of S5.	EIDR registration is what determines if an episode is officially considered part of S5.
EIDR registration IDs are available to the public.	Netflix's internal IDs are available to the public.
Delaying EIDR registration is a deliberate choice to keep the metadata (episode titles, runtimes, episode orders, etc.) flexible before it's publicly linked to a specific ID.	Delaying EIDR registration is an oversight or an accident.

- Delaying registration means that ep8 is not locked in as the terminal endpoint of the series yet. This doesn't confirm more episodes, but it does leave the possibility open.
- The bottom line is that EIDR registration doesn't make episodes **legal**, it makes them **permanent**.
- WSQK Radio has consistently given multiple kinds of hints at the idea of the show not being done. If you want to listen, someone archived all the broadcasts on [this site](#).
 - The final broadcast was on Jan 1, after the show had already ended, and started with a ton of static with a clock chiming in the background.
 - Some of the things that could be heard through the static include:
 - "Hawkins, do you copy?"
 - "We have no power."
 - "Try rebooting."
 - "Is WSQK still transmitting?"
 - Some people have been examining the sounds of the static and are saying it sort of sounds like someone is saying ["Wake up, Mike."](#)
 - For the photoshoot that the core four did for the finale, Finn is wearing a striped sweater vest that looks an awful lot like static waves. Finn is also the only one of the core four who isn't looking at the camera in his solo shot AND ALSO in the group shot. ([Link here.](#))



- "Another hour might be done but that doesn't mean it's our last hour. We got plenty of time to crank it up to eleven. If you do not know by now, our volume always needs to go up to eleven." → Some people are interpreting this to mean that we're getting 3 more episodes to get us to 11 total in the season.
- WSQK hosts gave several messages that someone is listening, watching, controlling, etc. ([Original post.](#))
 - "And you're not listening alone. You never were. Every voice, every song, every moment on this frequency traveled outward. **Spreading**, connecting, becoming something larger."
 - Will in S2 ep4 talks about the vines & UD and says, "They're growing, **spreading**, killing."
 - "We really took over this town, didn't we?"
 - "The studio is just where WSQK started from."
 - "The queen at the controls, Mindy Flair." → Mind Flayer.
 - "It was almost like you took the words right out of my mouth- and my brain!"

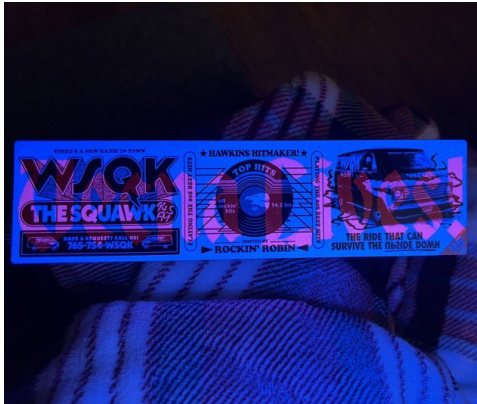


- The first song played on the final broadcast was the Final Countdown - again, the finale was already over by this point. Other interesting choices of songs* include:
 - You give love a bad name - lyrics say "Shot through the heart and you're to blame."
 - I will survive
 - I need a hero
 - It's the end of the world as we know it
 - Africa - lyrics say "It's gonna take a lot to drag me away from you."
 - Every breath you take - a song about being watched

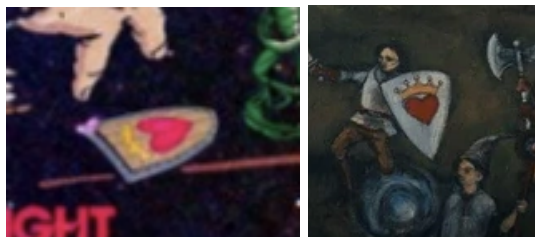
**Yes I do realize that these are also songs that were simply used in the show/popular 80s songs.*
- "The community seems more united and more curious than ever." → The ST fans are all asking questions about the finale.
- WSQK Radio comes back supposedly with new episodes starting Jan 11. Watch [this video](#) for more context.
- Mr. Whatsit requests the song **Silent Running by Mike & the Mechanics** from the album Out of the Blue. → [A song with very interesting lyrics...](#)
 - "Take the children & yourself and hide out in the cellar." → Take the children, like how Holly guided the children to safety but Holly has been paralleled with Mike several times. Cellar is also another word for a basement.
 - "Don't believe the church and state and everything they tell you."
 - "Can you hear me, can you hear me running, can you hear me calling you?"
 - "There's a gun and ammunition just inside the doorway use it only in emergency." → Flare guns are used only in emergencies to signal location when someone is in distress.
 - "Never hint at what you really feel."
 - ([Original post.](#))
- The mixtape labeled "For Will" consistently showed up in promotional content. → Interesting since music related to Will never really came up in S5. I actually got annoyed that the show emphasized Max listening to her song so much but when Will was unconscious, no one played music for him.



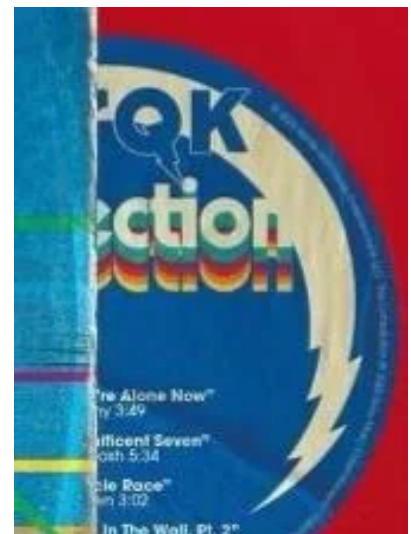
- [This reddit post](#) shows someone unboxing the official WSQK flashlight. → The box tells them to shine a blacklight on it, and when they do, you see the words “Vecna Lives.”



- Finn was given the painting from Will in one of the promotional series that Netflix did where they had cast members react to certain props. → the painting then wasn't mentioned AT ALL in S5 until we briefly saw it in the epilogue.
 - They also gave Noah the demogorgon piece from the first episode.
 - As wrap gifts, the Duffers gave Finn the demo piece, and they gave Noah the painting.
 - **Finn talked about how the van scene (i.e. the painting) would pay off.** Again, nothing happened. → The Duffers proved they can bring things full circle when Jonathan brought up how he lied on his college apps.
 - In the poster for ep8, **a shield with a heart** on it is visible, which is a clear callback to the painting and that scene when Will called Mike “the heart.”

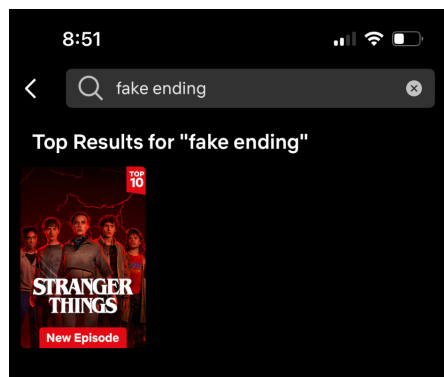


- Mike and Henry are connected by the Mind Flayer in one of the S5 posters.





- WSQK Collection Soundtrack was released which people speculated would tease some songs that would be used in the show. Some of those songs never showed up, including **Bicycle Race** by Queen and **Another Brick in the Wall Pt.2** by Pink Floyd.
 - Although the songs are VERY different, they're both about rejecting societal norms/conformity.
- Every chapter from the Stranger Things puzzles are named and themed around a particular setting from the show. → The final puzzle piece is the Rightside Up, implying that the RSU is actually a place.
 - This suggests that the episode takes place somewhere called The Rightside Up; the world that Vecna created as a part of his plan. ([Original post.](#))
 - After Ep8 aired, Caleb said something along the lines of "play along for something new!" → how could there be something new if the finale already aired? (Looking for the clip, stay tuned.)
- I was never really into SearchBarGate honestly, but just for funsies I looked up "fake ending" on Netflix and...
 - Tagging isn't done with AI or an algorithm. It's done by real people. Actual humans who watch the shows/movies and tag them accordingly. Those people can make mistakes (we all remember our favorite LGBT icon, the Babadook) but those mistakes are quickly fixed once they're pointed out.
 - Taggers wouldn't be allowed to purposely tag anything incorrectly.



- Having knowledge/doing research on the filmmaking industry is also so so sosoosososo important in understanding just how much planning actually does go into writing, production,

promotion, etc. Especially for big ticket shows/movies like Stranger Things, which is arguably Netflix's most popular show, if there was ANY sort of chance that the finale was going to flop as badly as it seemed to, there would be so many roadblocks put in to keep that from happening. Forcing the writers to rewrite the ending, postponing production, even sometimes recasting characters.

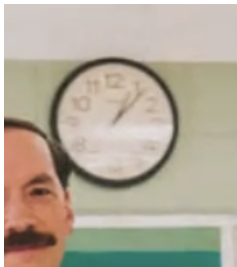
- For VFX heavy films, completion guarantors are used to provide a financial and contractual promise that the film will deliver and protect the studio's investment. → They have oversight into scripts, schedules, reshoots, and post-production, and they step in if creative or logistical decisions threaten the project's viability.
- Remember how much marketing and promotion and time and materials and whatever else actually goes into making things like the costumes, the set, the promotional materials, the legos, the funkopops, the For Will tapes, the WSQK channel, the t-shirts, etc. → Remember it's not just about actually making these things but also paying the people that make them (salary AND benefits).
- Financial decisions like this are not taken lightly. Engagement baiting is NOT enough to balance out the money that would be lost from promoting things like this that don't even matter.

January 7th

- The official WSQK station finished broadcasting on Jan 1 at 11PM. Around 10:50PM on Jan 1, the hosts gave their final message and said, "It feels like we've been with you for a lifetime, when actually it's only been 6 weeks."
 - Vol. 1 dropped on Nov 26. The finale dropped exactly **5 weeks later** on Dec 31. → **6 weeks later is Jan 7.**
 - When playing that final message on Jan 1, you can hear distorted clock chimes and ticking in the background.
 - "The week is long." → Jan 7 is exactly **1 week** after Dec 31.
- The Stranger Things puzzled event also ends on Jan 7.
- The Duffers said "It's going to be a dark Christmas." → Jan 7 is Orthodox Christmas.
- [Netflix posted a video that talks about something coming on Jan 7.](#) The video talks about the universe sending you signs, and that you can ignore it, or call it a coincidence, but how they **"know we have questions."**
 - When the video mentions **coincidences**, the girl is sitting at a bus stop with the Vol.2 poster behind her → Directly behind her left shoulder is Will; Mike isn't visible at all because the bus covers up his part of the poster.



- [This post](#) from Royal Mail that's just a video of a van driving into a storm with a ticking clock and distorted chimes in the background.
 - The video ends with displaying the date Jan 6. → Maybe pointing to an announcement on Jan 6?
- Joyce spent **6 days** looking for Will in S1. 6 days during which everyone told her she was crazy and that she needed to let him go. By Jan 1, the finale had aired everywhere (because of time differences). 6 days later → Jan 7.
- Stranger Things posted a TikTok about Mr. Clarke on Jan 5. In the background, the time on the clock says 1:07. ([Watch here.](#))

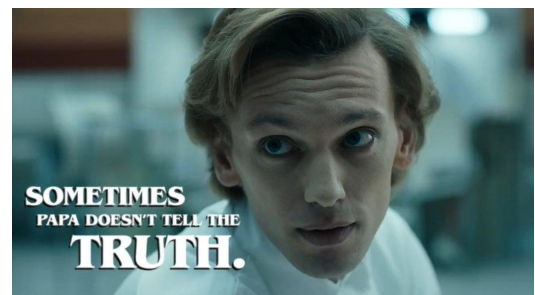


- Vecna's death also happens at 1:07 in ep8.

Interviews

**Putting this part last because interviews feel like the least reliable source, at least in my opinion. There's a reason why eye-witness testimonies are considered the weakest form of evidence.*

- Duffers address how when in the mind of a serial killer, everything feels “nice and cozy but there's just something off about it and that can feel very nightmarish in its own way and just as scary as a big CG monster or scarier.” → The epilogue feels much the same way. ([Interview link](#), ~25:10)
- There's barely been any interviews or post-season content released that includes the cast. This is really off for Netflix & the show in general considering how much promotional content they released leading up to the season. But now that it's over, the only interviews we're seeing that discuss ep8 are with the Duffers.
 - By this point in time for S4 Vol. 2, there were several different kinds of videos released with the cast reacting to certain scenes, answering questions, playing games, talking about their time on set, etc.
 - They were doing this throughout Vol. 1 & 2, but now for the ep8, they've decided to focus on the Duffers over the cast?
 - *This is just from what I've searched for online, so I could be wrong, but I looked for a while and I can't seem to find much relating to the cast discussing ep8 specifically.*
- It's very strange that the Duffers changed from being incredibly dedicated, serious writers creating the most complex and emotional show to what they are acting like in interviews now: arrogant, obnoxious, self-righteous, lazy.
 - It doesn't make sense that they emphasized paying attention to details THAT much to then giving answers like: “we just didn't feel like focusing on that.”
 - The Duffers latest response was about why there weren't any demogorgons in Dimension X. → Apparently, they were overused, so the Duffers claimed “demogorgon fatigue.”
 - No. Just no. They just have to be lying because this of all things just DOES NOT make sense. They emphasized returning to the roots of the show and what came from S1 & 2 so much, there's absolutely no possible way that they just decided to not include demogorgons anymore because they just didn't feel like it anymore. **They are lying.**
- [The Duffers were acting really suspicious when asked about making false endings.](#)
 - "I love when people do that but how do you have the time? Oh my god..." looking away from the camera. Ross was stuttering the whole time while Matt was saying "no no no no no" over and over again, etc.

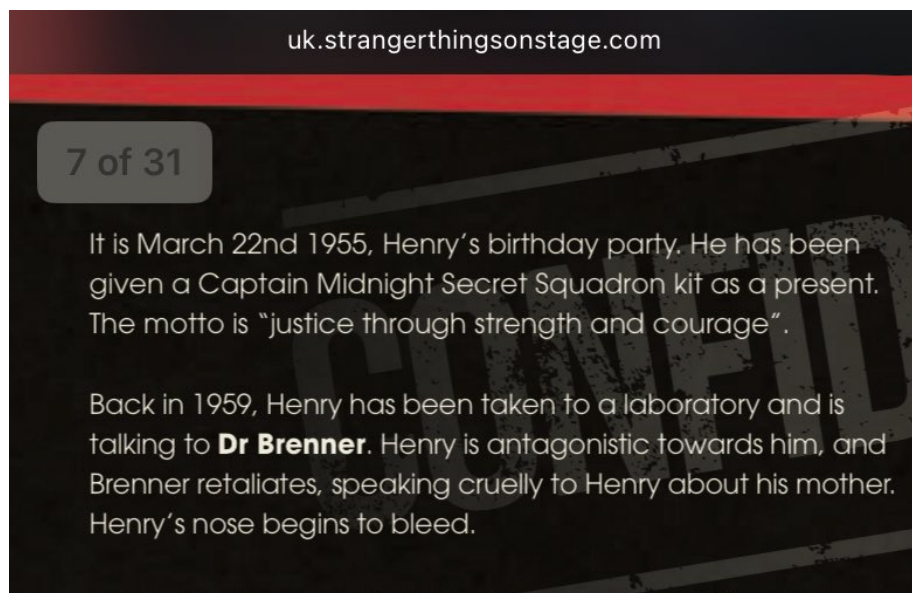


- Kate Trefry, one of the writers of the show and the First Shadow play, says the Duffers have terrible poker faces, and they can't hide anything.
- Shawn Levy discussed when he watched the ending and he said, "when I watched the FINAL version of the FINAL episode of the FINAL season..." → bro, why are you saying final so many times? ([Interview link](#), ~1:30)
 - In that same interview, he says "a lot of sins are forgotten and forgiven if you can stick the landing." (~1:10) → Sins? Like letting your fans down with a fake ending? Yeah, not sure I can forgive that so easily but we'll see if I end up not hating your guts at least.
- Shawn Levy making it a point to talk about how important it is to stick the landing and not make people feel like idiots for caring in the first place (i.e. Byler fans).
 - He also talks about a question that he wants to answer but he can't even say the question because that in itself would be a spoiler. → The question could be "Is byler going to happen?"
 - "This is a show for the heart from the heart." → Mike is called the heart of the party/show.
- The scene on the tower with Mike and Will - Noah said he asked the Duffers to add that in "to close out a specific chapter" and then Millie quickly talks over him to say "storyline." Then, Noah also quickly corrects himself to say "storyline."
 - "A chapter" implies that there's more to the story. "A storyline" implies this is the end.
- Finn said that the ending for Mike is something bigger than he ever could've imagined. → Mike didn't do anything in the finale and ended up alone.
 - This is also strange for Finn since he's an actor who seems to genuinely care about the characters he plays and puts a lot of dedication into his work.
- The Duffers mentioned how when they wrote S5, they stopped looking at opinions online, and specifically mentioned not looking at Reddit anymore. → Reddit is well-known to be an extremely conservative/anti-byler space in the fandom.
- Finn saying he can't say what song he uses to get into character because it's a spoiler. (I refuse to believe that song was Purple Rain.)
- Someone (I can't remember who) mentioned that they were really confused until they read the final script. Noah also consistently says that the show is very confusing but also genius.
- The boys consistently said they loved their characters' endings but there isn't much to those endings, especially for Mike and Will.
 - Also is weird for Noah Schnapp, an out and proud gay man, to say he loved his character's ending when his ending consisted of becoming the face of the biggest case of queerbaiting in television, especially when he openly shipped byler throughout the series.
- Finn stated that the Duffers told him that the van scene with the painting would "pay off." → again, the painting was just never brought up at all in the season until the final minutes when we just see it on Mike's wall.
- When asked how come Will didn't feel any pain when the team was killing Vecna, the Duffers said, "They just wanted to focus on Henry in the finale" despite acknowledging that Will was still connected to the hive mind.

- If Will is being erased from Mike's mind, it could also explain why we weren't seeing Will in pain when they were chopping Vecna's head off.
- The Duffers said there would be 5 deaths but we've only seen 3 - Kali, El, and Henry
- When Birthday-Gate first became a thing, the Duffers said it was just an accident that they picked March 22 as the date to show on the video camera in S4 even though March 22 was established as Will's birthday in S2.
 - The odds of that happening though are **1 in 365 or 0.274%**
 - If it was actually an accident, they could've just edited that part to fix it. (Especially because this video footage writing would've been added in anyways, they can go back and fix that easily.)
 - When other mistakes were pointed out though, like the Under Armour logo on Holly's sleeve, they were fixed post-release.
 - They never fixed the date on the footage.



- **Henry's birthday is ALSO March 22.** The odds that they would pick that same date for a third time is **1 in 133,225 or 0.000751%.**



- It's strange that Mike's epilogue involves him ending up alone and staying behind when this is what the Duffers have said about Mike's ending in the past:

Interviewer: What ending do you want for Mike?

Ross Duffer: Mike is a character that we really love, and we want him to find happiness and someone who loves him the way he wants and deserves to be loved. We want him to move from Hawkins, just like Will. Also, a great writer career, like he always wanted. *[laughs]*

- *[laughs]*

- Caleb at some point said “My finale is different from everyone else’s so I wouldn’t know [the answer to the interviewer’s question.” → Huh? He quite literally had the same finale as everyone else.